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Marlowe.

A DRAMA *in Five Acts.*

By JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY.

BOSTON and *NEW YORK:*
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY.
The Riverside Press, Cambridge.
1901.

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Published November, 1901.

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MARLOWE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

ROBERT GREENE,
THOMAS LODGE,
THOMAS NASHE,
GEORGE PEELE, ... *Playwrights and friends of Marlowe.*

GILES BARNBY . . . . . *Of Canterbury.*

GABRIEL ANDREW . . . *A young kinsman of Barnby's.*

RICHARD BAME.

OWEN,
DAVY, ... *South-Londoners.*

FRANCIS ARCHER.

ROWSE . . . . . *A sailor.*

HOST OF DEPTFORD TAVERN.

JERMYN . . . . . *Servant to Her Ladyship.*

BOY . . . . . *At The Bee-Hive.*

THE WATCH.

BELLMAN.

HER LADYSHIP . . . . . *Of the Court.*

ALISON . . . . . *Barnby's Daughter.*

DAME BENET . . . . . *Hostess of The Bee-Hive.*

GILL . . . . . *Of Deptford.*

The Watchmen, link-boys, taverners, prentices, men and women.

The action takes place between London and Canterbury, A. D. 1589–1593.

Marlowe.

Act I. Scene I.

Scene: *Interior of 'The Bee-Hive,' South London. A late Spring morning. Centre, a wide door-way, showing the street. Left (up), a door leading from a short flight of steps; (down) another door open on the inn garden. Right, a large chimney-place; a door beyond. Rushes on the floor. Sundry musical instruments hanging on the wall. — Down, to the left, a table set forth with mugs. Right, near the chimney, a smaller table; chairs. — Discovered at rise:* Dame Benet *and the* Boy *busied with Taverners going and coming. At the smaller table, alone, throwing dice,* Peele.

Enter Nashe *and* Lodge, *calling hilariously.*

Nashe.

O, 'Faustus!'

Lodge.

— Faustus, O! The hour is on.
Come forth!

Nashe.

— Come forth, wherever thou art hid!
(*To* Benet.) Dame, we are bidden here, and he is pledged
To pay the score. Reveal his hiding-place.

Lodge.

Sing, Muse!

Benet.

What manner o' man?

Nashe, Peele (*laughing*).

O, Faustus, Faustus!

Lodge.

— Where are thy laurels? — Why, Kit Marlowe then. (*They join* Peele.)

Benet.

Eh, Marlowe? Will you call him by his name?

[*Hallooing without.*

Enter Greene.

Greene.

Where is our Faustus? (*Seeing* Benet.)
Soft. . . .

Benet (*incensed*).

O, Master Greene!
'T is Master Greene again!

Greene.

It is, it is. —
I am an honored guest: forbid me not!
I come to celebrate Kit Marlowe's play
Of *Faustus;* but I swear to pledge thee first,
In thy most superfine —

Benet.

I warrant you! —

Greene.

— Of muscadine. Do so, my Inspiration!
These gentlemen are slack, but I am constant,
And I 'll begin, if thou wilt fetch the pint.

Benet.

You are most constant, sir, in pledging me,
But Master Peele there, has begun already;
Share cup with him.

Greene.

She doubts me! George, you knave,
Could you not save your thirst a little while
And drink a rouse to Kit, his tragedy?
(*To* Benet.) Come, if you will be stern, Zenocrate, —
There is the test of notability

In all this verse. Come, chick, I 'll take thee out
To see 't some day. Thou shalt hear *Faustus* swear!
And when Kit empties out his pocketful
To pay his score, and many scores to come,
And thine, and mine, and ours and every man's, —
Why, thou shalt grant me that it is a play!
[*Joins the others.*

Enter Barnby, *in haste.*

Barnby.

Good hostess, — pray you, dame!

Benet.

Give you good day.

Barnby.

Canst thou, good woman, tell me anything
Of Gabriel Andrew?

Benet.

Master Andrew? Ay
He 's wont to come here for a packet, sir,
Each week and sometimes more; some news it is
Of Canterbury.

Barnby.

Ay, we 're kinsmen there.

Benet.

He should be here this noon.

Barnby.

Eh, heaven be praised!
I will return anon, and bring my daughter.
We met with mischief here upon our way
To London, — where I go for marketing,
And she to visit. — Wilt thou keep a place
Where she may rest?

Benet.

O, sir, as neat as heaven.

Barnby.

That 's well; that should suffice. (*Going.*)
For let me not
Conceal from you, — I am of Canterbury —
It was my chance to have my money stolen.
Some cut-purse in the street —

Benet (*coldly*).

Then, sir, you 'd better
Try 'The Three Tuns' or —

Barnby.

Nay, nay, I 'll be plain.
This Gabriel Andrew is some kin of mine
And he will gladly lend me what I owe.

Benet (*curtseying*).

Oh, — Master Andrew! [*Exit* Barnby.

Enter Davy *and* Owen, *talking.*

Davy.

Come, that should be brave!

Owen.

I say, I saw it; and I 'll go again,
That will I!

Peele (*aside*).

Hist!

[Davy *and* Owen *sit at the longer table, left.*

Owen.

Boy, fetch a pint of ale.

Davy.

But what 's a '*Faustus*'?

Owen.

Why, it is the man!
This man you hear me tell of, in the play! —

Peele.

(Come, listen here!)

Owen.

And Faustus is his name;
And he it is, doth sell him to the Devil.

[*The playwrights approach, one by one, affecting a thirst for information. Other Taverners gather about.*

Peele.

What man is this?

Davy.

It is a man i' the play —

Owen.

'T is a new play; I saw it yesterday.
He sells his soul to the Devil.

Nashe (*hastening up*).

For how much?
What did the Devil pay for him?

Lodge.

— What man?

Owen.

Why, Faustus is his name. — It is a scholar
That doth most rare high talking; full of names
Of all the arts that ever you shall hear.
He tells of magic — and of Zodiac —
But yet he will have more!

Nashe.

Who 's Zodiac?

Owen.

Well, let that be. . . . He signs away his soul
Unto the Devil, and he signs with blood.

Greene.

Nay, in plain sight?

Enter Marlowe. — *He is reading a ballad that he carries in his hand. He is unobserved*

by the Taverners, who are absorbed in this account of 'Faustus'; and the name catches his ear. He stands behind his friends and hears with repressed excitement.

Owen (*to the group*).

Ay, you should see it, you!
'T is marvellous high with every kind of words;
And beyond that, 't is full of devilry,
And divers charms of magic and hell-fire;
Until his hour is come that he must die, —
When clock strikes twelve. And by and by he says,
'*O Faustus, — Faustus!*' Ye should hear him say —

Greene (*ranting*).

— *O Faustus, O!* — And what ado in that?
Shall this waste pennies? Shall this bring a crowd
By bridge, by water, — horse and heels, to see?
To pay a penny for a's standing-room,
And hear a dismal speech of 'Faustus, O!
Thou hast one hour to live!' —

Owen.

— So cuff me, now!
'T is a brave play.

Davy.

— Od'sbody! I will go
And see that very play this afternoon.
I 'll try it at a penny, and if 't be
As good as thou wilt say, I 'll have a chair, —
That will I!

Lodge.

This is madness. — Spendthrift, stay!
Lend me thine ear. (*Taking him by the ear.*)

Nashe.

Friend, friend, you force the loan!

Lodge.

Why should a man desire to witness this
Poor raven inspiration?

Peele.

Why dost thou
Waste a good penny on a dolorous tale
Of how a man sells his immortal soul
To the Devil?

Marlowe.

Ay! (*They turn.*)
What think you strange in that?
'T is an old tale, — a tale of every day.

Owen (*doggedly*).

I never heard it; and the play is brave.
He signs away his soul for twenty years

Of power and glory; power and power and
power!
He will have, and he must have, and he will.
Whatever 't is, why he will have it! —

Marlowe.

Ah! —
Doth thy tongue stick at that?

Owen.

But his doth fire!
He in the play, there is no holding him.
(Marlowe *listens, with burning eyes.*)
A made my ears hum! — 'T is a godless
thing, —
But for to see the arts he does, and all,
How he will raise up spirits to do his will,
And has *Fair Helen* out o' the history
To be his love —

Marlowe.

So! Does he that?

Owen.

Fair Helen?
He 'll have the very Sun out o' the sky!
And in the end —

Marlowe

— The end —

Owen.

The hour comes on;
The hour it strikes. — And after all, Hell has him! (*Loud laughter.*)

Marlowe.

So merry?

Davy.

Brave!

Owen.

But you should see it, you!
How when he signs with Mephistophilis, —
A poor sad devil, Mephistophilis —
I never saw a devil sad before —

Lodge.

Marry, wake up!

Owen.

You would be thanking heaven
It did not fall to you: else who could say? . . .
But later, look you, when his hour was come,
I did not grudge him, — by the mass, not I!
He talked of heaven and did make much of God,
So I began to heed, against my will,
And came nigh to a terror. (*Rises.*)

Marlowe.

That were base.

Owen (*vext*).

Oh, say you so! But if you see the play,
Grin if you can at that! — It is a wonder
How this man Faustus, who is damned in the end,
As all men know, should so call out on God
As to put me in a terror!

[*Exeunt* Owen *and* Davy. *Taverners disperse. The playwrights rush on* Marlowe. Marlowe *consults his ballad.*

Marlowe.

What is the air,
'Fortune, my Foe'? [*They hum, meditating.*

Lodge.

Come, have you spent the morning
Making a riddle?

Peele.

Come, wool-gatherer!
Have mercy. I am dry.

Marlowe.

Boy, bring the sack. [*Exit* Boy.
Help me. I have a rival in the street. —
'Ballad of Faustus'!

Greene.

Go up higher, Kit.
The gods invite thee.

Nashe.

Bite not, bite not, envy!

Lodge.

O Fame, O Fame, I see thou art resolved
To sup with us to-night.

Marlowe (*looking up hastily*).

To-night? What say you? —

Lodge.

I speak of Fortune—'t is a fickle lady. —

[Marlowe *recovers himself.*

But not the only one. Come, read.

[*They sit at the table, to the right.*

Marlowe (*reading*).

'*The Judgment*' —
The Judgment, mark! — '*of God, showed upon One John Faustus, Doctor in Divinity.*
Tune, *Fortune is my Foe.*' — What tune is that?
'*All Christian men, give ear awhile to me,*
How I am plunged in pain, but cannot die:' —

Greene (*reading*).

'*I liv'd a life the like none did before!*' —

Reënter Boy, *with wine.*

Peele.

Alas, alack! —

Lodge.

No more — no more —

All.

No more! —

Enter Gabriel Andrew. (Benet *meets him.*)

Gabriel.

Good-day to you!

Benet.

You 're called for, Master Andrew.
Some kin of yours in Canterbury —

Reënter Barnby.

Barnby.

Hey, lad —
'T is I! — What, Gabriel, lad!

Gabriel (*turning*).

God save you, sir! —

[*Their loud greeting attracts the notice of the playwrights.*

Nashe.

Who 's the old Puritan? I scent Puritan.
Gr-r-r-r!

Peele.

Down, down, sir! Naught but yeoman.

Greene.

— Russet, boy!

Barnby (*to Gabriel*).

I saw thee, lad. I saw thee, over yon
Just out of hearing. Eh! There is a smack

Of Canterbury still about thee, sir,
No guilds nor crafts nor prenticeships can take,
Nor City, nor the Borough. — Well, 't is brave! —
No city like our own; and so say all
That come to see it. — Stay now, wait a bit.
Well done, well done. Here 's more of us; my girl!
[*He hastens to the doorway and beckons.*
Our Alison. — I brought her up to visit
With our she-cousin Fenwick, over Bridge.
And well I put small money by my purse, —
Barely enough, mark that! — I lost it all.
Some cut-purse, lad, some prigger or some rook
Hath fleeced us on the way. And but for one
Young fellow passing, of a sober tongue,
Who showed us hither —

Enter Alison, *followed by* Richard Bame. *She stands in the doorway timidly, looking about her.* Barnby *still talks to* Gabriel.

Greene.

Ah, look there, look there!

Lodge.

Hey, nonny!

Marlowe.

I was born in Canterbury.
I did not know such grew there.

Lodge.

You are blind.
You are as blind as Love. I told you so.

Marlowe.

But see her stand, the little Quietude!

Greene.

She is my only shepherdess. Behold,
My next Song knocking at a hovel-door. —
O gods, how I will sing her!

Barnby (*turning*).

Alison.

[*She comes down, followed by* Bame.

Lodge.

Name for a honeysuckle!

Nashe.

Oh, scholastic!

Greene (*aside*).

O eglantine and hawthorn, Lady May! —
And strawberries — and dew, — and clotted cream!

Barnby.

Our girl, sir Master Andrew. Alison,
Give him good day.

Gabriel.

You 'll not forget me, mistress?

Alison.

No, Gabriel, No!

Barnby.

No, sooth! Well said, well said.
You were a prentice when she saw you last,
Good master-craftsman, eh! — But it takes years
To season our green lads of Canterbury.
None like 'em. Eh? — None like 'em.

Marlowe (*aside*).

None, indeed!
Here 's too much welcome, look you, for one man.
Eglantine, hawthorn, dew, and Lady May! —
He cannot have it all. — I 'm russet, too!

[*Rising impetuously and approaching the country group.*

What news from Canterbury?

Nashe, *Greene*, *Lodge*, *Peele* (*behind him*).

'Ware Tamburlaine! —
Hist, Russet!

[*The Canterbury people turn to look at him.* Bame, *hanging about for a word draws near. The playwrights ply* Marlowe *with asides.*

Marlowe (*to* Barnby, *naïvely*).

I beg indulgence, but methought I saw

Some Canterbury tan upon that face.
Sure, no mistaking such! —
[Barnby *and* Gabriel *consult.*
Nashe.
Kit, this is better
Than thy whole course of playing at The Curtain.
Greene.
Inspirèd Shepherd —
Peele.
— *Dog!*
Marlowe (*winningly*).
Doth no one know
Christopher Marlowe?
(*To* Benet, *aside.*) What 's the old man's name?
[*She whispers.*
Marlowe (*to* Barnby).
I see, I am forgotten.
Barnby (*puzzled*).
Nay, nay, come: —
Marlowe.
I pray your pardon.
Barnby.
Marlin, didst thou say?
Alison.
Christopher Marlowe?

Lodge (*aside*).
Soft!
Marlowe.
Madam, your voice
Sounds of the sky-lark rising from the downs,
At home! [Alison *is dumb with admiration.*
Bame (*moodily to* Barnby).
Well, I may go, sir, since you find
Friends everywhere about you. —
Barnby.
Nay, come, come!
This is the young man, Gabriel, whom we met,
After I missed my purse. —
[*Playwrights delighted.*
'T was he did show us —
Marlowe.
But surely you 've a welcome for Kit Marlowe?
Barnby.
Eh! Son of Marlowe? John, the shoemaker?
I know thy brothers well. [*Consults* Alison.
Marlowe.
The devil he does! —
Lodge (*aside*).
Down, Tamburlaine!
Alison (*to* Marlowe).
Sometimes they speak of thee.

Marlowe.

Sometimes? Indeed, I hope! —
(*Apart.*) But not too often!

[Alison, *left*, *talking to her father*. Bame *accosts* Marlowe.

Bame.

Wilt have thyself the only man in Kent?
I too have kin in Canterbury.

Marlowe.

Too late.
The kinsfolk are all gone. You know you are
Some borderer, some third wife's second-cousin.
Some stranger-in-law to a step-farther-on!
Now, I have never seen you till to-day;
And, as a Kentish man, I will commend
No other man unto a Kentish maid.
Go to, go to. Thy conduct may approve thee,
When time lets all be seen. Patience, good soul!
Remember that the meek inherit the earth, —
When other men are done with it!
(*To* Barnby) I, sir,
Glory to call my own our blessed City;
How timely happy, I have never known
Until this happy morning, — that dear Shrine

Of the most holy Martyr — (*aside*) and of me.
'T was at the King's School —

Alison.

I remember thee! —
When I was little.

Marlowe (*aside*).

Save me, Reminiscence! —
(*To her.*) And I a school-boy? — As I live!
Wert thou —
Wert thou the little poppet, used to cling
Fast to my hand when I was sent to buy
A pennyworth of bread? And was it thou, —
Growing no taller than a wild sweet-brier —
Used to reach up a piteous little hand,
To stroke the pigeons at the poulterer's,
Strung up to buy, — and call them 'pretty birds,'
And blow their feathers soft, to wake them up?

Alison.

Why that was I! Father, he knows me well.

Marlowe (*to* Greene).

How now, Cock Robin?

Greene (*aside*).

And I swore he could
Never create a woman! — Name us to her,
Or I denounce thee.

Peele.

Share and share alike.

Gabriel (*to* Marlowe).

There be not many of our town, you mind,
That share your quality.

Marlowe.

Yet, oftentime
I dream of those old days and turn about
Whether it were not better to go back
To the old folk, — the sheep. —

Nashe (*prompting*).

The shoes, the shoes! —

Lodge.

O Scythian Shepherd, now assume thy Shoes!

Bame (*to* Benet).

He is a knavish player, as thou dost know.
Speak up for me. I shewed them on their way,
And they 've not asked my name.

Benet.

Stay till they do. —

Marlowe.

Dear Mistress Alison, have I your leave
To do my fellows honor? For they crave
To wear their names before you. They have heard

Of Canterbury days! (Here Tom, here Tom.)
This is my fellow-student, Thomas Nashe;
The gentlest soul that ever spitted man
Upon an adder-tongue, — the scourge of vice,
Sleepless protector of all Puritans.
(*Presenting* Lodge)
Step hither, Tom. Here is another Tom,
Tom Lodge, the Second Son of our Lord-Mayor;
Our nobly born. This is our Sunday Tom.
A poet, too. And smile upon him, mistress,
Trust me, that smile of yours shall never die
Out of the world. — My good friend, Thomas Lodge. —
Entreat him kindly, for my sake.

Lodge (*aside*).

O, Faustus!

Marlowe.

And Master Peele, of whom the world relates
A thousand jests he had no knowledge of.
It is the price of his most fertile wit
That every quip, to pass for current coin,
Must stamp it with his name. Come hither, Robin.
Let me commend to you this gentleman,
Master of Arts, indeed!

Benet (*apart*).

Of the black arts!

Marlowe.

His nature, like his name, o'ergreens whate'er
He looks on, with such pastoral invention
As would enchant your wits and hold you bound
With charms as innocent as ring-me-round! —
His very name 's a lure to every rhyme.

Bame (*to* Marlowe).

By all you say, you are great folk to know.
If I were trained a player, I could tell
My worth as aptly.

Marlowe.

So? Good Master Barnby,
Here is a friend suspects you have forgot him.
He says — he too has kin in Canterbury.
Do you not know his face? Bethink you, sir.
I heard you speak of mischief by the way,
And one you met thereafter?

Barnby.

Ay, so, so (*bewildered*).
There is a look about him —

Marlowe.

Richard Bame
His name is. — And that look? — Now might it be

The man, by chance, who took your purse?

Bame (*violently*).

The devil!

Benet.

Good gentleman —

Lodge (*clapping* Bame).

Tush man, a foolish jest!
Come, Kit, the hour is on. — You must be going.
On to the play! (*Hastening* Marlowe.)

Gabriel.

What play is that?

Lodge.

Why, 'Faustus,'
Kit Marlowe's tragedy.

Alison.

— Is he a poet?

Gabriel.

About the scholar who did sell —

Alison.

Oh, father,
Oh, father, let us go!

Barnby.

No, no, my girl.
Here is no place for us, though Gabriel
Bid his friends find him here.

Gabriel.

'The Bee-Hive,' sir,
Is never riotous; bide here and see.
Oh, do not go to-day — sir, Alison!

Marlowe (*to* Alison).

I 'll comfort thee full measure for the play.
But stay awhile, I 'll teach thee my best song,
And 't is of shepherds and as white as sheep.
This, for the sake of home!

Alison.

Do thou remember.

Gabriel.

And, Master Marlowe, tell me, what are you?

Marlowe.

Why, sir, I am the man who wrote the play
Of Faustus who did sell him to the Devil!
I am the man, the devil and the soul, —
Good-day to you!

[*Exeunt Playwrights.*

ACT I. SCENE II.

SCENE: *The same: evening. — There is now a fire in the chimney-place. — Candle light. The street door is closed. Discovered at rise,* DAME BENT *and the* BOY, *at back, counting up scores.* ALISON *and* BAME *near the fire.*

Bame.

So now you stand assured of me and mine,
Will you go with me soon to see the Fair?
I have as good a right —

Alison.

Oh, Master Bame,
Here are no rights! — It is a courtesy.

Bame.

You look as if you dreamed.

Alison.

Well, it is late.

Enter Jermyn.

Jermyn (*to* Benet).

Harken, is Master Marlowe here?

Benet.

Eh, 'Master'?
And 'Marlowe' here and 'Marlowe' there!
— I tell thee

He is grown great thus sudden! — Nay, good sir,
He is not here as yet. Will you be served!

Jermyn.

I come to bid him wait a message here
From one — some one that 's never asked to wait.

Benet.

Oh, sir, he should be with you very soon:
He said as much; within the hour, I swear.

[*Exit* Jermyn.

Bame (*to* Alison).

Come, mistress. Will you find some closer place?
Here 's too much noise if that one be upon us.
'Devil,' — I well believe it; as to 'Scholar'
I am not wise enough to spell out 'Scholar'
From Knave and Roisterer.

Alison.

Will you not learn
Rather to use your eyes than to give ear
To what a grudge may say? Indeed, I think
It was a gentle thing for him, a poet,
That he should so entreat our memories,
And we but country-bred!

Bame.

Ay, very gentle!

Enter Gabriel Andrew.

Alison.

Ah, here is Gabriel. Tell me, Gabriel,
Did father find my cousin? — Nay, not yet!

Gabriel.

That did he, and he bade me fetch you there
Before 't is darker — if you wish to go.
They are on fire to see you.

Alison.

This same night?

Gabriel.

He will be back; and if you are not eager,
Or if you should be weary, or if —

Alison.

Please,
I will rest here to-day. To-morrow 's soon
Enough to see my cousin. I would rest.

Benet (*coming down*).

Why, so thou shalt. Too many gentlemen,
All bowing fit to dizzy a maid's mind!
Come, come, good Master Andrew! She shall rest
With me to-night. Her father lends her to me,
And he 'll return anon. Why, hair o' silk,
But this is rare in London!

Gabriel.

That I warrant.

Bame (*to* Alison).

Since you will wait here, mistress, I will go.
Commend me to your father. It was he
Said you should go with me to see the Fair
To-morrow.

Alison.

Then? Will not the next day serve?
And since you know our cousin, Master Bame,
You will know where to find us.

Bame (*going*).

I will find you.

Alison.

Good even. [*Turns back to* Gabriel.

Bame (*to* Benet, *going*).

As to thee, I say, — I say,
Take care. There will be soon no gentle-folk
To pay thy rents, if thou wilt entertain
Such brawlers as were here at noon. Thine ale
Is good, thy cakes are honest, but I 'll eat
No more of them if I share board with such!

Benet (*incensed*).

'Brawlers?' And 'Such,' — and 'Such!' Nay,
I 'll be bound —
This is Extravagance! — What, Master Marlowe?

Bame.

The devil take him! —

[*About to make his exit, he collides with the playwrights who enter in high feather*, Peele, Greene *intoxicated*, Lodge, Nash, *last of all* Marlowe.

Peele (*stopping* Bame).

What, that Face, that Face! —

Nashe.

Stop Face! — 'Thou hast a look of Canterbury.'

Greene (*singing*).

Hey, Canterbury!
Sing hey, sing ho!
Be merry, be merry,
With briar and berry,
And down-a-down derry —

Lodge (*singing*).

And buds in the snow!
And merrily so,
So ho!

[*Exit* Bame *angrily.*

Nashe.

More matter, Tom. This is a bacchanal
For laurelled brows.
(*To* Greene.) Come, Shepherd of black sheep;
Take up thy crook, — thy one of many crooks —

Greene (*seeing* Alison).

Don't use me so — before the Shepherdess;
She puts me out of favor with myself.
Go on, go on, let no man interrupt. —
I am a Master of Arts.

[*Exeunt* Benet *and* Alison, *left*.

Peele.

But will you rime
'Zephyr' with 'heifer' for a pastoral?

Greene.

Pastoral? Bah, go to, go to! — I know.
I have a sentence for you. 'Even as . . .
By the pale light of Hesper, Philomel,
Who singeth while a thorn doth pierce her heart' . . .
Where am I? [*Exit* Gabriel.

Nashe.

— Where? In Southwark.

Greene.

Nay, nay, nay! —
Where i' the sentence?

Nashe.

Oh, 'Doth pierce her heart.'

Greene.

'Heart, that is pierced by the cruel thorn' —
Where am I?

Lodge.

In 'The Bee-Hive,' of the Borough.

Greene.

Nay, in the period?

Marlowe.

Why, 'The cruel thorn!'
Come pluck it out, for pity sake.

Greene.

'The thorn,
Which, by the light of Hesper, Philomel,
Who singeth' . . .

Nashe.

When she singeth!—

Lodge.

—Where she is!
So safely home again.

Greene.

But where—

Nashe.

Lost, lost,
Poor Robin! Hold by me, and when the Watch
Comes by, he shall to rescue with his lanthorn,
And tell us where we are. [*Reënter* Benet.

Greene (*laughing*).

O, Tom, O Tom,

I feel as merry as a madrigal.
Oho! Oh, this would stir you up to laugh,
Could I but get it out! See you not why
They call it madrigal? — It hath a point
To prick your nose upon — a mad — mad — mad —

[Benet *hastens towards* Greene.

Lodge (*to* Benet).

Why, this is genius, not intoxication.

Benet.

Under my roof? Again? O Master Greene,
You, you! — I could have sworn. Come sir, be off!
To The Three Tuns, — The Owl, *The Owl's* the place!
If you 'll go down, why to *The Owl* you go;
Ay, low and lower down, and worse and worse,
To a bad end! — It 's in your face. I see it.

Greene.

To a bad end? No, no.

Benet.

It is as sure
As gospel-spelling. Ho, who need be born
With a caul upon her eyes to see the end
Of Such, — of Such! — Out with you!

[*Hurrying him out to the street.*

Nashe.

Robin, flit!

Benet (*calling after*).

To a bad end! — [*Reënter* Greene.

Be off!

Greene.

O, wait, good woman! —

Good Benet, take it back.

Benet.

What then?

Greene.

The curse.

You did not see it? Nay, the end — the end.

Benet.

I will not say a word.

Greene (*doggedly*).

Nay, I 'll not go,

Until you take it back.

Benet.

— Saint Ananias!

Will you begone?

Greene.

Ah, take it back, good Benet.

Benet.

Well, then, I take it back. — Now take thyself.

[*Exit* Greene, *between* Nashe *and* Peele.

The crazy-pate! — [*Exit, right.*

Marlowe (*to* Lodge).

Good-night.

Lodge.

What ails you, Kit?

Here 's hospitality, — no ears, no eyes,
Even for that selfsame little country-maid
Who so remembers you!

Marlowe (*going up*).

Benet, I say —

[*Rouses the* Boy, *who starts up.*

Is there a word for me? A messenger?

Boy.

There was the footman from My Lady —

Marlowe.

Hush! —

Boy.

Said one desired to see thee, — will be here —

Marlowe.

When, when?

Boy.

—' Know not.

Marlowe (*aside and coming down*).

To-night, then, — ay, to-night.
Gods! — What imperial largess! I shall see her,
See, speak with her, and then . . . I do believe
The world is mine to-day!

Lodge.

Well, Tamburlaine,
Give me a word before your chariot
Shall whirl you out of hearing. Tell me now,
Who is 'My Lady — Hush'?

Marlowe.

You ask me this?

Lodge.

I ask it. Modify thy royal kick,
For sake of old acquaintance.

Marlowe.

Jest not, Tom.
It is none else but — *Helen*, the world's joy,
The world's triumphant torment.

Lodge.

Ah, heigh-ho!

Marlowe.

Hers is the Beauty that hath moved the world,
Since the first woman. Beauty cannot die.
No worm may spoil it. Unto earth it goes,
There to be cherished by the cautious spring,
Close folded in a rose, until the time
Some new imperial spirit comes to earth
Demanding a fair raiment; and the earth
Yields up her robes of vermeil and of snow,
Violet-veinèd, — beautiful as wings,
And so the Woman comes!

Lodge.

Heigh-ho! — A dream.

Marlowe.

Immortal, then! What have we but our dreams?
Why, to fetch wisdom out of the Holy Book,
That hath a saying or two, — 't is such as dreams
Alone, that moths corrupt not. Actions, deeds, —
Realities you call them, — all are sham.
Tangible dust, true death, most real decay!
The worm can prove them real, — by eating them!
And then, where, where?

[*Touching his own breast.*

Is this Kit Marlowe, think you?
Bah! I am what I say and what I dream,
Ay, what I dream and dream! — this fellow, here,
Is none of me.

[Alison *appears, left, on the threshold steps, looks down wistfully, then exit, unobserved.*

Lodge.

O Faustus, Faustus O!
Thou art far-sighted; so far sighted, boy,

That thou wilt waste away with longing for
The one lost Pleiad! In the sad meanwhile
Thou wilt not see what 's nearest to thy nose.
Take it: 't is wisdom. So some Helen smiles
On you?

Marlowe.

To-day! For all things smile to-day.
I know, I know, fortune may cloud again.
But now the Sun will have his sovereign whim.
One triumph brings another by the hand,
And all the rest come crowding.

Lodge.

— For a day!
And she would crown you with a laurel wreath,
In secret?

Marlowe.

Think! For her to seek me out,
A goddess to a beggar! Why, my lair
Is more uncertain than a tiger's rest;
And yet she did not summon me to Court.

Lodge.

No. (*Apart.*) And I wonder why!

Marlowe.

She speaks with me
Here in the Borough; sometimes at this place
Whither I come, thou knowest, when I have
more

Than a bad penny! — I would not have her step
Too near some thresholds I am driven to,
Such as poor Robin haunts.

Lodge.

But —

Marlowe.

You will ask
Why, then, to-day is more than other days?
Because to-day, 't is true, 't is true, — I won!
'*Faustus*' — is Fame. The people and the Court
Were all one voice. Ned Alleyn had his laurels;
And I win mine and wear them. Oh, I knew
Her, through her mask, — and those applauding hands!
'T is come at last. Even the mongrel ballad
I found this morning, tells me, welcomely,
I have attained. — Oh, she shall not confer
All, all, forever. I 'll be glorious, —
No beggar poet! She is *Helena!*
Was it a little gift, think you, to say
Such things of woman?

Lodge.

So. 'Was this the face' —

Marlowe.

'Was this the Face that launched a thousand ships
And burned the topless towers of Ilium!'

Lodge.

Sun yourself while ye may, Kit, — sun thyself.
Thou sayest true; thou art a glorious madman,
Born to consume thyself anon, in ashes,
And rise again to immortality!

Marlowe.

The only immortality, of Fame, —
Glory on glory; of unflinching gaze,
A pride that shall outstare the northern lights.
And when I die? — An arrow from the Sun!
Oh, if she cease to smile, as thy looks say,
What if? I shall have drained my splendor down,
To the last flaming drop! — Then take me, darkness,
And mirk and mire and black oblivion:
Despairs that raven where no camp-fire is,
Like the wild beasts. I shall be even blessed,
To be so damned.

Lodge.

I cannot follow you.
You would be arrogant, boy, you know, in hell,

And keep the lowest circle to yourself!
So mad are you? — And yet I could have sworn
Your eyes took interest in the little saint
We saw to-day.

Marlowe.

The little country shrine?
Why so they did. And therefore she was made.
'T is only she will look with pitying gaze
On me in gorgeous torment. Snowflake pity,
Destined to melt and lose itself in fire,
Or ever it can cool my tongue! Ay, Tom.
I owe the Faith more tribute than I pay,
For its apt figures. Con thy Bible, Tom.
I 'm glad they chanced here. I shall think, sometimes,
Just of her face: the little Quietude,
Standing in shelter, quite immovable,—
And reach my hand up for a tear, a drop
Of holy water from those hands of hers.
She fills the only need was left to me;
And sooth to say, I never thought of it
Before I saw her.

Reënter Alison.

Lodge.

Look you, there she is.

Marlowe.

Ah, cousin Alison!

Alison (*on the steps*).
Good-even, sir, —
Sirs. But I am not 'Cousin' Alison.
Marlowe.
Forgive. I have a longing to make sure
Of anchorage somewhere. You did not see
The play this afternoon? [*She comes down.*
Alison.
My father would not.
He should be here by now. He went to see
If he could find our cousin, over Bridge.
I am to stay with her till market 's over;
And if she wish, until Midsummer-Day.
[Lodge *retires up and tickles the* Boy, *who is dozing, with a rush.*
Marlowe.
What can I do to hasten this bare hour,
Or sweeten it for you?
Alison.
If you would sing —
The song you promised . . .
Marlowe.
She remembers that?
(*To* Lodge.) Come here, you Second Son, and ply your art.
Boy, where 's the lute?

[Boy *starts up, takes lute down from the wall and gives it to* Lodge. Lodge *comes down and they seat themselves near the table,* Lodge *and* Marlowe *opposite* Alison. *Reënter* Benet *to listen, at back, with drowsy satisfaction.*

I showed thee of this air,
Did I not, Tom? Now set me off my verse.
'T is called '*The Passionate Shepherd to His Love,*'
And listen to the words, and you shall learn.

[Lodge *plays;* Alison *watches* Marlowe *artlessly.*

Song.

'*Come live with me, and be my Love,*
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods or steepy mountains, yields.

'*And we will sit upon the rocks*
Seeing the shepherds' —

Enter Barnby.

Barnby.

Well done, well done now! How is this my girl?
Too weary — wert thou?

[*Coming down, followed by* Benet.

But thy cousin's house
Would better feed this cheek with red again.
And I to know thee for my Alison?
Tired of London? So?

[*Exit* Lodge, *yawning.*

Marlowe (*aside to* Benet).

Oh, take him hence.
I shall be going soon. But till I 'm gone —

[*Gives her a coin.*

Benet.

Now, Master Barnby, will you see the Inn
And have your comfort?

Marlowe (*to* Barnby).

Only let her stay
A moment more, until I end the song.

[*Goes up to the street door.*

Barnby.

What song is this? Well, tarry if you will.
Be cheery, wench, and pipe up for thyself
And show them how we sing in Canterbury.
Ay, so! Well done.

[*Exit, left, preceded by* Benet *with a candle-dip.* Marlowe *opens door, centre, and looks up and down. The* Bellman's *voice passes chanting.*

Bellman.

Hang — out — your lights ! —

[Marlowe *lets the door fall shut and comes down abstractedly towards the lute which* Lodge *has left on the table. He sits and takes it up.* Alison *sits, dreamily, on the other side of the table, and listens spell-bound, while* Marlowe *watches her face.*

Bellman (*passing without*).

Past — nine — o'clock and a — starlight — night.

Marlowe (*sings*).

'*Come live with me, and be my Love,*
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods or steepy mountains, yields.

'*And we will sit upon the rocks*
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

'*And I will make thee beds of roses*
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle;

'*A gown made of the finest wool*
Which from our pretty lambs we pull,
Fair-linèd slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold.

. . . . . .

'*The shepherd swains shall dance and sing*
For thy delight each May morning.
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my Love!'

[*At the end of the song, she does not move, but sits looking straight before her, held by his eyes, as if she were charmed. He reaches his hand across the table towards her. She does not move.*

Marlowe.

Why, this it is to listen! — Art thou dreaming?

Alison (*like a child*).

I do not know.

Marlowe.

And will you not say Thanks?

Alison.

Oh, Master Christopher —

Marlowe.

The song went ill?

Alison.

Thou knowest that it did not.

Marlowe (*laughing*).

Alison,
Sweet friend, thou art so frugal of thy praise!
And yet this song is often paid in honey.

Alison.

It is most wonderful.

Marlowe.

Then why so still?

Alison.

Oh, everything is changed.

Marlowe.

Why? Tell me why.

Alison.

Indeed, I do not know — I do not know.
I never heard these things. — Thou art a poet.
I never saw a poet — and I wish —
I could know more.

Marlowe (*laughing aloud*).

You do? And so you shall.
Look, Eve new come to Eden! Well, of all
New things, thou art the newest new-comer!
Was it the song?

Alison.

The song — ay, that, and thee:
And everything.

Marlowe.

The song and everything —
Within the song! And what is there, stray child,
What strangeness? — What but love, as I am blest, —
Love — love! (*with great enjoyment*).

[*She rises, startled.*

Where are you going, Alison?
What would you know of poets? All things new!
Gods! For the boon of such a listening ear,
Eager and charmed to listen, such a soul,
Wide as the first, first morning! — Alison,
Poets have need sometimes: I would be thanked
As only you can thank me. For the Song,
I 'll give it to you — (*rising*)

Alison.

Wilt thou?

Marlowe.

And for that,
Give me a kiss . . .

[*She looks at him with candid amazement.*

Sure, that 's a little thing. Our English maids
Give kisses where they will. Do you not so?

Alison.

Yes . . .

Marlowe.

Why, then, give it me. — You do not know,
But yet I have a fancy that from you
Some charm must come with it, some blessedness,
Such as I have no name for. — Alison.

[*She moves towards him unconsciously, ever delaying.*

Are you so frugal? There 's the way of maids.
The smallest boon they will deny; but ask
With arrogance, and have what is to have!
Well, I 'll be arrogant, to make it dear.

[*Stepping farther away and holding his arms towards her, where she poises, regarding him.*

What are you? Faith, no woman, and no child:
A little Dream that pities not a prayer, —
Will come no nearer tho' the dreamer starve,
For fear a kiss might bind you! — Faith, I know
You will not stay, Bird-shadow! You will fade,
At the first omen of —

Enter Jermyn, *from the street.*

Jermyn.

— Her Ladyship.

[*Exit* Jermyn, *leaving the door wide. Enter* Her Ladyship. Marlowe's *arms drop; he turns, brilliant and bewildered, towards the door as* Her Ladyship, *the upper part of her face masked, advances.* — Alison *shrinks away, puzzled, regarding them.*

Her Ladyship.

Well, 'Faustus,' do you know me?

Marlowe.

'Helena'!

Her Ladyship.

I was in doubt lest I should find you here,
Beset with mad companions, noisy wits,
Such as I saw resorting to thy side
Where thou wert sitting, poet among poets,
But none like thee! — Come, let me hear yet more;
But no, it must run dry.

Marlowe.

No, never, never!

Will you have more?

Her Ladyship.

Yes, more of it, more, more!
This is new wine you pour me. I am fired
To know how much your tongue may dare.
You climb

Such dread audacious height. I watch, in terror
To see you fall, and dash this god to clay.
More of my music! — I am thirsty now,
I, who have had such words as not the Queen
Ever commanded yet, and knew them mine.
I was thy *Helena?* Thou swearest it? —
Nay, by the rood?

[Alison *slips out, left, into the garden.*

Marlowe.

Thou knowest thou art she.

Her Ladyship (*holding off her mask exultantly*).

'Was this the face that launched a thousand ships!'
More, more! — You 're swift to promise, but, my Faustus,
You can no more.

Marlowe.

Helen, you draw me on
From world to world and whither none can follow.
'T is you discover to my insatiate mind
Seas, countries, spheres I never dreamed before;
All longing, and the imperious will to be
A glory that shall hold your looks, I swear,

As the Sun compels his flower to turn to
him.
Yes, you shall listen! — Yes, you shall drink
down
Imperial draughts of honey, fire, and dew;
And if you will, my last pale, savage pearl,
To make more precious with unpitied death,
That fearful wine!

Her Ladyship.

Are you then so much mine?

Marlowe.

Thine and the Sun's!
Light draws me, and I follow. Drink my song.
Grow fair, you sovran flower, with earth and
air;
Sip from the last year's leaves their memories
Of April, May, and June, their summer joy,
Their lure for every nightingale, their long-
ing;
Fill you with rain and sunset; live and thrill,
Whose master-work is only to exist!
Terrible Beauty, that can so enthrall
And bind the service of all elements,
As they were serving-maidens: eyes and mouth,
You give back to the silence of the Earth
Whose treasury you beggar, only silence.

Her Ladyship.

—And this.

[*She kisses him. Reënter* Alison *from the garden, unnoticed.* Her Ladyship *and* Marlowe *go towards the doorway. Outside appear two link-boys with torches.*

Act II.

Scene: *Garden of The Bee-Hive three weeks later. — At back a high wall, with a postern-gate, centre, showing a distance with house-tops and trees. — Right, an entrance to the Inn, with steps. Another door below the steps, leading to a cellarage. Left, wall covered with vines. A little to right of centre, in front, a large vine-covered arbor, open, front and back; the sides trellised. Within, a rude table with two benches, another seat outside; upon it a trencher with beans and carrots. Between the arbor and the garden-wall, left, a row of hop-vines trained on poles, planted thickly. Other shrubbery. A bench behind the hop-vines. Summer afternoon.*

Discovered at rise, Gabriel Andrew, *standing moodily in the entrance of the arbor, as if waiting for some one. Enter, hurriedly, from the Inn,* Bame.

Gabriel.

WELL, what 's to say?

Bame.

You know as well as I.
'T is all of Alison.

Gabriel.

I had rather think
Of Alison to myself than talk with any.

Bame.

But will you reason?

Gabriel.

Deeply, if I can.

Bame.

You know our talk. You saw as well as I,
How that quill-spoiler cozened you and her,
And had her eyes and hearing, so none else
In all the town made any sound to her!
Not you yourself, although you had the right,
Knowing them well at home; while I was strange.
And strange I 'm like to stay! And yet I paid
Some little service; met them on the way
And showed them to The Bee-Hive. I can name
My kin among the towns-folk that they know.
I have as good a right —

Gabriel.

To wait — to wait.

Bame.

Ay, then, to wait! But wherefore, ask thyself.
Do you not see we are waiting for this Marlowe
To have her up and off and out of reach
Before our eyes?

Gabriel.

That maid is not the maid
To shake from any bough.

Bame.

But do you see
How she is altered ever since that day,
And day by day, of late, with watching for him?

Gabriel.

So you have seen her, day by day, of late.

Bame.

As well as you.

Gabriel.

Marry, as well as I!
H'm, with two daily suitors the poor maid
Should feel her hearing worn. I cannot marvel
That she is pale.

Bame.

Ay, she is pale enough.
Yet still she visits with her cousin there,
Week in, week out.

Gabriel (*troubled*).

I do not grudge her London.
A maid should see the sights.

Bame.

And she sees none.
I have entreated her to come with me,
To Paul's, to Chepe, to hear the singing-boys;
And she will stay indoor as if she feared
To lose some jewel, an she left her house.

Gabriel.

Ay, doth she so?

Bame.

Thou wilt not boast to me
It was *thy* face.

Gabriel (*whimsically*).

No, no, faith, if I could
I would; but have thy slender satisfaction.
Eke it out with a carrot! — Well, you say
She will not go with you? Nor yet with me.

Bame.

Until to-day. To-day! — Ah, listen now! —
I 'm on my way to bring her to the Gardens
Yonder, 'to see the shows.'

Gabriel.

You shall be proud.

Bame.

To see the shows, forsooth! But until now,
I had begged her to come with me anywhere
Save hither, to the Borough.

Gabriel.

Well, poor maid,
Must all her joy be bounded north by west?

Bame.

Thou hast my meaning. When I spoke of this,
She gave me such a smile as I dare vow
Thou never hadst, and promised me to come;
Begged me to bring her to see Benet here,
That same 'old hostess that was kind to her.'
I go to meet her at the waterside,
Since this is all of London she would see! —
'T is Marlowe — Marlowe — and thou knowest well
The maid is pining for him. Ay, by heaven,
Waiting to catch a grain of news, as pigeons
Flutter and flock to peck a lentil up.
She treasures every word that folk let fall
About these players, — covering her ears
To words that mar, as true word only can;
Denying all with shudders; and sometimes, —
The music that he taught her —

Gabriel.

Music? what?

Bame.

Oh, I was not far off.

Gabriel.

I warrant you
I was; or had I caught you listening,
I would have —

Bame.

Save abuses. You shall use them
To better purpose yet. I say the man
Made merry for an hour with charming her,
A hunter, weary of his fowling-piece
Until to-morrow! But the charm has worked.
She dare not breathe till he shall come to say
Breathe so, or so. She lives not in to-day.
I tell you more. He shall not have the girl
An if he wanted her. And yet if not,
I hate him more, that he can spoil the day
So lightly. — And the more, for it was he
Made me a butt before you all —

Gabriel.

A jest!
No more. What grievance? People of this part
Are used to rougher jesting.

Bame.

You conceal
What you are building.

Gabriel.

Under simple thatch!

Bame.

Come, you are fair.

Gabriel.

Well, then I will speak out.
This is my first thought. My maid is not one
Whose whims or fancies are to be set down
By russet folk. She may think as she will:
I do receive it. I could no more dream
Of climbing up a wall to peer and pry
Into the garden of her mind, than steal
The blossoms from her father's orchard-close
To rob him half a harvest. Go your way,
And I 'll go mine. — 'T is all with you, to-day.

Enter from the lower door of the inn, Dame Benet. Bame *goes to inn-steps and turns.*

Bame.

Take thought once more.

Gabriel.

I will take thought once more:
And if need be, why once more after that!

[*Exit* Bame, *right.*

[Benet *recovers her carrots and beans, from the bench; sits down, and prepares them.* Gabriel *stands against the arbor-trellis beside her, abstracted and gloomy.*

Benet.

This were a pretty tale now, Master Andrew!
What would The Bee-Hive do without you, then?

Gabriel.

Why, when, dame?

Benet.

Lack! So far away, are ye?
Why, when you take to farming once again,
In Canterbury.

Gabriel.

Oh, 't is years away —
If I should do so ever. I was dreaming.
'T was hearing of — old Barnby — set my wits
Veering to homeward like a weather-cock.
Tell me, is Master Marlowe hereabout?

Benet.

Until the day is over, who can tell?
There is no dial for these player-folk
And poets. 'T is all Swallow-while-you-may!
When they are paid, why so am I, betimes.
Then to The Bee-Hive, oh, I warrant ye —

They swarm to me; for there is no such ale
Brewed, nor cakes baken, here in all the Borough;
And that they know. But when the times will change,
And they split quills with writing of bad plays
And get scant payment as all such deserve, —
Then to The Merry Friar; to The Owl! —
Until your *Owl* will none of them, — so down,
To some I never name.

Gabriel.

The tide will turn.

Benet.

And peacock moult. 'Ods life! Such velvet clothes,
And footmen bringing messages all day
From Lady Here and There. And yet tomorrow,
Gone, like last Mayday, where? Your peacock hides
Throughout a moulting season.

Gabriel.

But this Marlowe,
He is the best of them? Come, is he not?

Benet.

Best? What is best? This '*Faustus*' paid his score.

I doubt not 't was a play — but there be plays
Of far more noise than that. He will make free,
As if he built The Bee-Hive! Now he 'll pay,
And now he 'll owe. He is not given to talk
With me. — I do hear tales of him.
They say
He is a fearsome Atheistical.

Gabriel.

Do they say that? Bah, dame! What right have men
To spread abroad this pestilent They-Say,
And take us with infection ere we know?
I care not for this Marlowe, good or ill;
But yet I have a left-hand, country-bred,
Shuffling affection to a slandered devil; —
Comes of a zeal for driving my own kick
Where my own wit shall aim.

Benet.

Ay, ay, now there;
This is discourse.

[*The* Boy *appears at the lower door.*

Boy.

Have ye the lentils ready?

Gabriel.

Say, now, is Marlowe like to be about,
To-day?

Benet.

Who knows? This moment or next year.

Boy (*entering*).

She 's calling for the lentils. [*Takes trencher.*

Benet.

Here, you boy! —
It shall not leave my sight.

Boy (*going*).

Come after, then!

[*Exit* Boy *by the lower door, followed by* Dame Benet *in haste.* Gabriel, *after a pause, turns decisively and exit by the postern-gate. Immediately after, reënter* Bame *from the Inn. He pauses on the lowest step, speaking back.* Alison *appears in the doorway.*

Bame (*lagging*).

Nay, if I must go back — But blame not me,
If the day goes awry. I did not think
You set such store by our Dame Benet here,
To send me to the stairs again to find
A paltry hood. It was not in my thought,
And so I left it with the waterman; —
But if you made it, 't is another thing.
I will go back. [Alison *comes down the steps.*

Alison.

And I will wait for you,
Here.

Bame (*sullenly*).

— Will you so? I did not know you were
So fond on Benet . . .

Alison.

She did much befriend me
The day we came to London. Young as I,
She saith she doth not see us often here;
And so I made that keepsake with all care,
To show her I remembered. Master Bame,
Why will you be so dark with me?

Bame.

I 'll go
And find the bargeman. Shall I find you here,
When I come back? 'T is cooler than indoor.

Alison.

Sure I will wait.

[*He watches her come down, then exit* Bame *hurriedly by way of the Inn.*

Ah me, but I will wait!
How long, how long, with nothing else to do?
But I am here again. — It cannot seem
The way I saw the threshold that first day,
Before the world began. Why, it was he
Told me I looked a very new-comer,
And laughed, and guessed a little of the truth,
How new it was to me; but yet not all.

(*Beside the arbor.*)

O little vine, I wonder if the first
Long draught of rain when you are budding first,
May be like that? — The first high noon? I love you, —
I know not why; I love you. Dear you were
And pleasant to me, ever; but I think
I never saw before. He called me Eve.
I took it for a jest, but now indeed
I think I never lived at all before.
God made me only now! . . .
Oh, here again, —
Again where he is —

[*Noise in the street of laughter and men's voices.* Alison *looks from the postern-gate to the Inn, between fear and delight, shrinking behind the shrubs and hop-vines.* Marlowe's *voice is heard from the unseen group in the street.*

Oh, not now — not yet! . . .
Yes, listen, listen, listen! — Mother of God!
My prayer is answered, and I cannot stay! —
I cannot stay. [*Gate opens.*

Enter Marlowe, *speaking back. He shuts the gate.*

Marlowe.

No, no I tell you, no.
This is my hour. — No, no, another time!
Leave me alone.

[*He stretches his arms and comes down indolently. He has a book in his hand. He enters the arbor, and sits; opens the book, pulls a leaf or two from the vine, reads a bit, leaning his arms on the table before him; then shuts his eyes and after a heavy sigh or two, falls asleep.* — Alison, *listening in an agony of suspense, peers through the vine-covered lattice, left. She shakes the vine softly and he does not stir. She speaks in a very low voice, with rapturous wistfulness.*

Alison.

Do you not hear? Praise God, he is asleep.
But I have seen him. — Ah, so you can tire,
Yes, even you. Oh, this is more than I
Could dare to pray for, — that you should be near
And never see me. She is grown more patient,
This Alison. Ah, if I only knew —
But I do know: I 'm walking in a dream.
I saw — I heard. Did I not hear enough?

I 'm nothing: only eyes to watch for you.
I 'm nothing, only silence.
[*Sobbing into the vine.*
If I dared
To wake you and to ask you what it meant:
Oh, if I only dared to give you — now —
[*He stirs, turning his face towards her. She is motionless for a second. But he sleeps.*
Why am I such a nothing, with no gift?
I who would keep you guarded if I might,
From all things ill. Oh, if I were the Moon,
How I would shine upon you, brow so dear,
How white your dreams would be —
Oh, guard him well,
For me — for me.

Enter from the Inn, Gabriel Andrew.

Gabriel.
Is Master Marlowe there?

[Alison *retreats, left, behind the hop-vines.*

Alison (*apart*).
What, Gabriel? Oh, how shall I begone?

Gabriel (*coming down*).
Heigh-ho! I 've spoiled a dream for you, I see.

Marlowe (*waking*).
Yes, true enough. Nay, sit. 'T is not my garden,

Although I lord it, of an afternoon,
In dreams and out of them. A patch of green
Must serve us for an Eden.

Gabriel.

Ay, sometimes.
And yet when I do plant my garden-plot
Of Eden, I would have it further off
From here.

Marlowe.

Oho, in Canterbury!

Gabriel (*reluctantly*).

Ay.
Does your mind go there?

Alison (*apart, rapturously*).

He remembers all!

Enter quickly from the Inn, Bame. *He comes down to the arbor and sees only* Marlowe *and* Gabriel *talking.* Alison *is hidden. He casts a suspicious glance about.*

Gabriel.

Well, Master Richard Bame?

Bame.

Give you good-day.

Marlowe.

What do you lack?

Bame.

Something I lost but now.

[*Exit into the Inn.* Gabriel *puzzled.*

Alison (*apart*).

Alas, poor man, I meant to keep my word,
Indeed.

Marlowe.

It is the most aggrievèd devil!
I cannot walk out, of a holiday,
But I must run against his raven-beak,
Croaking above some harvest. Hath a grudge
Against me, — what, I know not. Well, your worm
Must needs be here to make it Holy Eden.

Gabriel.

You spoke of home. I wonder now— Wouldst ever,
If the way came, think to go back again,
To live?

Marlowe.

My kindred do not yearn for me.

Gabriel.

Nay, but perchance if you do yearn to have
The downs again, and all the comely ways
You spoke of; and the cherry orchards too,
As poets may, tho' I know nothing of it! —

That song of shepherds, you were bound to sing,
It will have been a song, now, as I guess,
Only for singing; but you cherished it.

Marlowe.

What song? '*Come live with me, and be my Love*'?
Marry, you good old homebodies have ears
Of kinder welcome to a madrigal
Than I dreamed, ever. I remember now.
The little Quietude was full of wonder
Her tongue refused to tell, at that same song.

Gabriel.

The little Quietude? —

Marlowe.

Your Kentish maid,
The Eva of this Eden, to whom I sang.
She had great eyes — [*Alison rapt.*

Gabriel (*heavily*).

— The little Quietude.

Marlowe.

And silken hair. She was all made of stuff
Too fine for country wear. I marvel Nature
Who plans such ruddy milk-maids, should have set
A hand to make that lonely masterpiece

Among the hop-fields. Why, she was a maid
Of crystalline! If you looked near enough,
You 'd see the wonder changing in her eyes
Like parti-colored marvels in a brook,
Bright through the clearness!

Gabriel.

— Ay, 't is Alison;
As like as if you saw her, to read off
What 's in her face. Now I could never say.

Marlowe.

And do you see her, now?

Gabriel (*dully*).

She hath a cousin
Over in Cherry Lane — and —

Alison (*apart, hidden in the shrubs*).

Gabriel dear!

Marlowe.

Oh, 't is the cousin, then! Ay, trust a man
Bred in the fields to lose his wit in London,
And take up with some painted city-madam
Would give her hope of a celestial throne
For that swan-quiet, and the morning gaze!
Heigh-ho, you farmers, living face to face
With the untarnished loveliness of Earth
And with no eyes to see it! Sullen red
Of sunset and dove-plumage of the dawn

Are weather, weather, weather! — and the Wind
That bloweth where it listeth — ha, brave Wind! —
Muzzle it, would you? — lest it should make free
With the young orchards! Why, for this same maid,
Her name might be —

[*She listens rapturously, nearer and nearer.*

Gabriel.

— The little Quietude.
But you should see her sometimes when she laughs.
'T is like — I cannot say. Well, you can say
Whatever comes to mind, and more, belike.

Marlowe.

I could do honor to Her Quietude
Till song run dry!

Gabriel.

— So then. You love her?

[Alison *stands with her eyes shut.*

Marlowe.

Love?

Gabriel.

Ay.

Marlowe.

Do I love her?

Gabriel.

Is it Yea or Nay?

[Marlowe *laughs long.*

Marlowe.

Come, tell me; do you love the Evening Star?
But that 's a riddle, man. — I know to thee
It is a timely taper, lighted high,
Before the curfew bell!

Gabriel (*fighting off his relief*).

You love her not?
Well, then. I know not why I talk so long
Of all these things apart. I was but thinking;
You spoke of home, and you can see her face
And talk of it such wise, I thought — mayhap, —
They being my neighbors there at home, I thought —
If 't were your mind to take up life again
And have our maid to share it — if it were,
I might so do you service — speak a word,
Seeing I know her father.

Alison (*apart in an agony*).

— Gabriel!

Gabriel.

And as you mind, at home your quality
Are held in less esteem than —

[Marlowe *still laughs.*

Alison (*apart*).

Gabriel ! —

Marlowe.

Come, is it I ? — Good sooth ! I tell thee, man,
I like thee ; come !

Gabriel (*rising*).

What laughter is in this ?

Marlowe.

None, none, but all in me ! Nay, come sit down.

[*He leaves the arbor, and goes to the steps of the Inn to call.*

Hey, there, — bring out a tankard.

[*Returns, and continues to move up and down, talking animatedly, while* Alison *is driven back to her hiding-place. It is now sunset.*

Come, give ear,
And I will teach thee a philosophy
Shall save thee many a making of thy mind,
To ravel out thereafter. I 'll be plain.
I asked thee, would one love the Evening Star ?

To thee it was a riddle. Listen, then:
What is all Love but *I-Will-Have*, *Will-Have*
What I must have, — I love. And I will have it.
But, for the Evening Star, I have it, there.
[*Pointing to the sky.*
I would not have it nearer. Is that Love,
As thou dost understand? — Yet is it mine
As I would have it: to look down on me,
Not loving and not cruel; to be bright,
Out of my reach; to lighten me the dark,
When I lift eyes to it, and in the day,
To be forgotten. — But of all things, far!
Far-off, beyond me, else it were no star.

Gabriel.

Ay, that 's a star. A woman, then —

Marlowe.

A woman?
A woman must be near, to be a Woman!
Dreams change their color as they leave the stars
For this engrossing air that folds the world.
The birds fly lower, lower, to a nest;
The small uncounted brightnesses, that fleck
The thwarted sunbeam with such lively gold,
Settle into a kindly earth again, —

The dust that men are made of! Glory close,
Love near at hand? — Must-Have, Will-Have, indeed!
World beauty not to dream of but to hold, —
Woman! What else?

Gabriel.

And wilt thou love no woman?
They say not so of thee.

Marlowe.

Oh, leave 'They Say'!
I serve a lady so imperial fair,
June paled when she was born. Indeed, no star,
No dream, no distance, but a very woman
Wise with the argent wisdom of the Snake;
Fair nurtured with that old forbidden fruit
That thou hast heard of. It was made for her,
Oh, and she eats thereof and lives forever!
And what she is, and breathes, that I Will Have;
Yes, — though the fruit were twenty times forbidden,
Yes, by a God who should walk here and now, —
Here in the garden, in the cool of the day,
Yes! — I would eat, and have all human joy,
And know — and know.

My kingdom of the air,
I have it: spaces where no thought may rest,
Unfooted heaven lighted by lone stars,
And gulf on gulf of dark. But here is Earth;
And Earth I will have, too, and we will leave
The garden-place together, under the Frown! —
And smiling back upon the flaming sword,
Out of the closure. — Love! —

[*Stir in the Inn, and voices.* Gabriel *ready to leave the arbor.* Alison *behind the vines, exhausted.*

Alison.

Ah, God forgive this pitiful eaves-dropper! —
I am so much the wiser. Let me go,
Home.

Enter from the Inn, the playwrights, Nashe *and* Lodge, *followed by the* Boy *with a tankard, and* Peele *carrying the cups.*

Gabriel (*going*).

Well, I will bid you —

Nashe (*meeting him*).

Whither away so fast?
Who pays the score?

Lodge.

Come, come, our old friend Andrew!

[*The two conduct* Gabriel *back to the arbor.* Alison *looks for some way of escape and returns to her hiding-place.* Boy *sets down tankard and exit.*

Nashe.

Face it out with us! If we go alone,
Kit, here, will pelt us with his dithyrambs.
Know you these dithyrambs? 'T is a green plum
Sweet in the mouth, but in the belly bitter,
Like the little book within the little Book
Our pious Kit doth swear by.

Lodge.

You shall drink
God-speed to me! I go upon a voyage.

Peele.

Alas, dear Tom, now after all this going —

Nashe.

At last he goes. And we, a year in wait
Drinking Farewell and Yet-again-good-bye!
And more Godspeed, and so Your-safe-return! —
But now, it seems he 's going.

Marlowe.

Where is Robin?

[*A cuckoo-call from the street.*

Lodge.

Ask not, Discretion. Nay, it cannot be.
O hardly Robin, even under ban!

[Greene *climbs over the postern-gate and comes down cautiously.*

Greene.

Is my sweet Hostess there? Or doth she dream
Within, and dream of me? — Bah, what is she?
I 'm a new man. Go tell her, with my scorns,
I 'm at The Mermaid.

Nashe.

Liest, — Robin Redhead!
'T is a good twelve-month since The Mermaid saw thee.

Greene.

Tell her The Mermaid hath such company,
I never show my head there, when my wits
Are rusty. Then, I burrow in The Bee-Hive,
A dull, safe place! And tell her that my wits
Are damaged by the quality of her ale. —
Once was I the salt of wit. But now ye see
I 'm damaged. Fellows all, say if I be not?

Peele.

Ay, ay, good Robin.

Lodge.

So thou art.

Peele.

Come, come.

[*He pours the ale at the arbor table, singing carelessly.* Marlowe *sits to left of the table,* Gabriel *beside him;* Lodge *outside, with his back towards the vines;* Nashe *within the arbor.* Greene *comes down to the bench just outside the arbor.*

Peele (*singing*).

If you have a heart, you break it;
Have a purse, a knave will take it.
Therefore wise men all beware!
Save your head, but nothing in it,
Spend an hour and waste a minute:
Nothing have, and have no care.
Nothing keep, for there 's a plenty!
Fill the bowl, but drink it empty.

Hey, lo-lo! Sing Nothing with a Naught!
When I was born, 't was Nothing I brought.
And when I leave this world of thought,
May the devil take me, if I take aught!

[*Under cover of the noise,* Alison *tries to steal out. It is twilight. But* Greene *hears the leaves shake, and catches a glimpse of her behind the vines. She re-*

treats in haste and clings there, quiet and watchful.

Greene.

Soft, soft!

[*He begins to sing romantically, accompanying himself upon an imaginary lute, and keeping an eye on the vines.*

(*Singing.*)

Her cheek is hawthorn and her voice the rain;
Her eyes are window lights that never wane,
So morning-clear.
Alas, dear April, when she comes again,
Shall I be here?

Marlowe.

He 's mad, poor Robin!

Greene.

— 'Sh! Don't startle her.

(*Singing.*)

For she is kind as all the fields are fain,
And she will cheer the grass with sun and rain,
And cowslips dear.
Alas, sweet April, when they spring again,
Shall I be here?

Soft — soft —

Marlowe.

What do you see?

Greene (*boisterously*).

A farthingale!

[*Laughter.* Gabriel *starts and takes thought.*

Lodge.

This is The Bee-Hive, Robin, — you should know!

Peele.

— Where? Where?

Greene.

What is a hive without a queen?
Come all, — a serenade! — Each man his own.

[*In great good spirits, but not noisily, they burst into song, each man his own melody, making a cheerful tangle of noises.* Gabriel *moves cautiously towards the front of the arbor.*

Marlowe (*singing*).

'Come live with me, and be my Love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods or steepy mountains, yields.

'And we will sit upon the rocks
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.'

Nashe (*singing*).

O let me win some warmth within,
And then I will be merry,
For Grief is but a chilly thief
Grows fat in February.
Hey, hey! Ho-ho!
'T was ever so,
Since Adam ate the cherry.

Lodge (*singing*).

With '*But*' and '*But*' and good '*What-if*'
I still make shift to tarry.
The man who cannot cheer him so,
Oh, let him go drown or marry!

Greene (*singing*).

Hey, merry maid!
Leave your lattice window, pretty;
Sure to hide you were a pity.
Never be afraid.

Look forth and see
Who it is that comes to borrow.
Never wait until to-morrow;
Come and kiss — me!

[*During this mingled singing*, Gabriel *comes down close to* Alison. *She starts back.*

Gabriel (*with compassion*).

Stay — stay! 'T is only Gabriel. —

Alison (*faintly*).

Ask me not —

Gabriel.

I will ask nothing, sweet.

Alison.

No, Gabriel, no!

Gabriel.

Dear child, come home, — come home.

[*Behind the vines, he disposes her scarf about her face; steps forth from the shrubbery and turns toward the postern-gate. The playwrights leave their seats, amazed utterly.*

Peele.

— Now, here was shyness!

Nashe.

The country-man? O moral upside down!

Greene (*calling*).

Stop, Angel Gabriel! Stop, disciple Andrew!
Only a word to ease my mind, — one word!
Was it thy sweetheart?

Gabriel (*turning, between* Alison *and the playwrights*).

Ay.

[*Exeunt* Gabriel *and* Alison *by the gate.*

Marlowe.

Who was the girl?
You saw her face? — Well, by the shooting-stars!

Nashe.

Sweet opportunity, she passeth by.

Lodge.

Oh, the lost Pleiad!

Greene (*singing with the others*).

'When she comes again,
Shall I be here?'

Act III.

Scene: *A tavern in Deptford. — A lapse of three years between* Acts II. and III. — *It is a shabby interior, with scores scrawled in chalk upon smoky walls and wainscot. — Doorway centre giving on the street. From right to centre at back, the corner of the room is cut off in a series of casement windows, all open, showing a bench outside against the inn wall; and a distance. Beside this casement, a table and a seat. Books on the table, ink-horn and quills. — Left, up, door leading into tap-room. Against the wall, other tables with draught-boards, etc. — It is afternoon.*

Discovered at rise, Lodge, *looking bronzed and somewhat older, on the threshold. He enters, looks about, peers out of the casement, sees and tries the quills; opens a book; smiles and turns a few pages.*

Lodge.

HIS. They were right: he must be here.
[*Calling.*
Holà!

Enter from the tap-room, Richard Bame; *on seeing* Lodge, *he pauses and makes as if to go off again.*

Eh, not mine host? Stay, do I know thy face?
[*Bame faces him.*
Why, surely, — Richard Bame.

Bame (*with constraint*).

Ay, Richard Bame.
You are home again.

Lodge.

After a sorry voyage,
To a worse home-coming. Nothing but the plague! —
The sickness widens round our city-haunts
Like rings around a pebble. They do tell me
There 's scarce a player to be found in London.

Bame.

Ay, they are out of work, the feathered ones!
And we that have no feathers, — out of work.

Lodge.

Drowned out, by all this tolling of the bells —

Bame.

And pageants of the dead men.

Lodge (*turning to the casement*).

Here 's fresh air! —
And Marlowe 's here? Odd chance. I never used
To look for him, but you were thereabout,
You, who mislike all players and all poets!

[*Looking out of the casement.*

Bame.

I like — to hear him talk. [*Between his teeth.*

Lodge.

— And Canterbury?

Enter Host.

Bame.

There is no news of late. I come to-day
Looking to meet old Barnby when he passes.
Deptford is come to be the market now
For South o' London.

Host.

Ay, the countrymen
Cannot go nearer to the city folk.
They sell their poultry in the open fields
Here, while the sickness rages. Ay, fat times
For Deptford, — if our dock yards were not full
O' journeymen and sailors out o' work.

These were fat times for Deptford! Still, — no shows,
No wandering singers now, no plays, no baitings.
'Prentices, players, all with naught to do,
And seamen roving free! Your rope-makers,
Idle all day . . .

Enter Jermyn, *from the street.* Bame *makes him a sign to keep silence. He enters and comes down to meet* Bame. Host *leads* Lodge *towards doorway, while* Bame *and* Jermyn *stand watching them out of the way.*

Lodge.

I will wait here awhile
For Master Marlowe. Know you not the name?

Host (*cautiously*).

There be some fellow — of some name like this —
Is wont to come here of an afternoon
And sit there by the lattice, gazing out.
'Oweth me much. But I do let him sit,
Freely, for nothing, an he will be quiet.

[Lodge *looks at him in bewilderment, then goes to the doorway and steps out.* Host *follows to discourse with apparent anxiety. They talk apart just outside the door.*

Jermyn (*to* Bame).

It is her Ladyship would have me say
She is beholden to your evidence,
For all the court; altho' they do not know.
But this will have him barred from the Queen's Players.
My Lady bids me have you greatly thanked
For your true zeal — against this atheist —
And sends you here — [*Holding out a purse.*

Bame (*pushing it away*).

No, no! I 'll none of it.

Jermyn.

Not as a price; yet for thy pains to follow,
And keep close track on all his blasphemies.
Thou hast the paper, setting forth the same?
Give it to me. — The man is dangerous.
[Bame *produces a document from his coat.*
And this same writ may serve to stop his mouth,
Another day! Give me the writ. So. Witnessed? [*Reads.*
'*A Note containing the Opinion of Christopher Marlowe*' —

Bame.

Silence! — Come apart.
It is to keep —

Jermyn.

Until the time be ripe.
— 'That he persuadeth men to atheism' —
[*Glances through it.*
And thou wilt swear that thou hast heard it all?

Bame.

Day in, day out, from his own lips I have it,
Over his meat and drink with other men. —
Sworn, laughed, and sung! There 's nothing out of reach,
To make them bow, — there 's nothing left, too high! —
But the created Earth, and God that made,
Are level with the laughter and the dregs.

Jermyn (*still reading*).

And you will testify?

Bame.

Take it! — have done. [*Exit* Jermyn, *left.*

Reënter Host *and* Lodge.

Host (*pointing through casement*).

Look, there he comes.

Lodge (*boyishly, standing away from the casement, with his back to* Bame).

He knows not I am here! —
[Bame *watches the casement for a moment, clenching his hands with bitter exultation,*

then exit noiselessly into tap-room. Marlowe *appears outside the window, walking slowly. He is greatly altered, haggard, pale, somewhat shabby. The* Host *lingers, curiously.*

Enter Marlowe. *With the same unseeing abstraction, he passes* Lodge, *goes to the chair by the casement, sits down, and looks out as if watching for something.*

Lodge.

Kit! — Art asleep, man? — Hast no word for me?

Marlowe (*after looking at him*).

Ay, is it Tom? I had thought it was some trick
Of fancy; or thy ghost. — So, is it Tom?

Lodge (*clapping him, vexedly*).

I have a mind to wake thee in good sooth! —
I am just landed these few days ago, —
After the seven plagues, — to one plague more;
And here 's a welcome! — Here 's a cheek, an eye,
A humor! Do I know thee? Is it thou?

Marlowe.

Eyes? Worn with watching. Cheek, indifferent lean.

Humor? Time wears. You should know
that, explorer.
You find us, Second Son, in moulting season.
Talk not of me — But you. —

[*Exit* Host.

Lodge.

But all of us!
Where 's Dekker now?

Marlowe.

Redeemed again, last week;
Dick Henslowe paid. So, while the sickness
wears,
He 's patching plays to earn some wherewithal
To patch a doublet!

Lodge.

Ay, old Tom. And Ben?

Marlowe.

Married.

Lodge.

There 's Ben! And is there news of Will —

Marlowe.

I know not. He is come to print of late
With a sometime poem, '*Venus and Adonis*.'
Nashe? gnashing with his teeth! — but you
have heard.
And now our Lyly languisheth.

Lodge.

And Greene. —

Alas, poor Robin!

Marlowe.

Ay, you well may say,
Poor Robin! But for pity of his end,
I could still rate him for the pious stuff
He wrote a-dying! — Had he saved his breath,
He had made it last the longer! Bah, let be.
He's dead, poor Robin. — Dead of nothingness,
And the ten thousand follies. End the drone.
He was a Poet, as the mire can tell.
And the poor keeper of that uttermost den
Did honor to his wreck, as beggars may,
And crowned him with a laurel. Thankless brow
Of death, that could not feel! — But it was there.

[*Looks out of the casement again.*

Lodge.

What dost thou see there, Kit?

Marlowe.

Why, dust, Tom, dust.

Lodge.

Kit, I had something I would say to thee,
But thou art in no mood to hear it now.
I 'll to the dock, and I will come again —

Marlowe (*rising*).

When I have cast my shell? Nay, — nay, go not.
Thy news was nothing good. So much I know.

Lodge.

There have been foolish rumors in my ears,
Even in these few days, — some old wives' tale
Of painted devils; yet these frighten some!
Why wilt thou mar thine image?

Marlowe (*impatiently*).

Is it marred?
Along then, with the rest!

Lodge.

You know me better.

Enter from street, Rowse *a sailor, and several Taverners. They go into the tap-room. The open door lets in some noise of roistering. — A jangle of horses' bells is heard approaching.* Marlowe *points to the bench outside the window. Exeunt* Marlowe *with* Lodge, *centre. They are seen to pass the window and*

to sit talking without, as the inn-yard noises increase. Reënter from tap-room Host, *and exit, centre. After him* Bame *in haste. Enter from street, old* Barnby, *dusting off his frock.*

Barnby.

Well, Master Richard, I was nigh to miss you!
I 'm homeward bound. — Ay, home 's the happier
After those borders. — Eh? No sickly air
With us, sir!

Bame.

True enough. I have a mind
To go along with you, may-hap —

Barnby (*troubled*).

Ay, so?

Bame.

What tidings? There will be some? — Tell me, sir.

Barnby.

Tidings enow. 'T is tidings bid me stop.
I would not have ye come by all the news
Through any other man. Well, clap my hand
And take it manly. Thou wilt wish her joy.
Our Alison is wed. A month ago,
On Easter Monday; Alison is wed . . .

Ay, Gabriel wins; and thou wilt wish him well.
So, so. I know thou 'st counted on the lass,
And many another man. — A month ago.

Bame (*wildly to himself*).

So it was all for nothing! — All for nothing!

Barnby.

Take it not thus.

Bame.

For nothing — nothing — nothing!

Barnby.

I marvel ye had patience to hold out
This good three year. — A maid like Alison
To wear me out three harvest-times, and sigh,
A-making of her mind! But she is wed,
And happily; and thou wilt wish them well,
Like every honest man. There be not many
Such as our Alison! — Nay, nay, there be!
The fields are full of them, — no downcast looks.
There be a score o' wenches still in Kent
As good as — mark, in Kent — no other place;
And we will have thee wed.

Bame.

— Talk not of that.

Barnby.

Come out and drink a pot of ale to them.

Bame.

Another day. Prithee go see the host. —
Farewell.

Barnby.

Ay, ay, now. Take it manly, lad.

[*Backing away with an anxious eye on* Bame.

Reënter Lodge *and* Marlowe. *Exit* Barnby, *centre.* Bame, *turning suddenly, sees the two men.*

Bame.

So. You have heard it all.

Lodge (*gloomily*).

O man, man, man!
There be some things to listen to, beside
Thee and thy business.

Bame.

Do not put me by;
I say he heard.

Marlowe.

Heard what? — And if, what then?

Bame (*fiercely*).

Why, the wheel turns, and it shall grind thee too! —
Thou wilt not have her.

[Marlowe *looks at* Lodge.

Lodge.

Peace. The fellow 's mad.
Bad news has turned his brain.

Bame.

Stand off from him.
No feigning now! — ye heard it all. She 's wed
To Gabriel Andrew — wed to him — at last,
Through thee, through thee.

Marlowe.

What is all this to me?

Bame.

It shall be something yet. I saw thee first,
Ay, from the first day when you cheated them
With tales of old acquaintance, and made fond,
And charmed the eyes of her, and took her heart,
But for a whim. — Oh, I was not far off!
Tho' you had made me a butt before them all,
And turned her favor from the laughing-stock.
Nothing to you it was! — All other folk, —
Their homes, so many ant-hills! — All the world
A show for you, a cheaper show than yours; —
A pageant wagon, — with the people, here,
And overhead, their angels and their God,

Another show! — And you to laugh at all.
Laugh, laugh! Whatever 't was, 't is all gone by,
Never to laugh at more.
But I can tell you,
Oh, I can tell you, now it is too late,
That she was pining for you. — Now she 's wed.
Alison 's gone! You will not have her now.
Ah, now you are no more to her than I!
[*Murmuring.*
The spell is broken. She would see you now
But what you are — a strolling devilry,
A knave and a blasphemer, Atheist!
Marlowe.
The fellow 's mad. But mad-men should be bound.
Call me what names your rage will foam in, fool,
But never cut me with that lash of spite
The pious use! 'T were much to thy discredit.
Be thy poor venom, venom. Hate and hate! —
Seek not to find a reason.
[Bame *staggers to the door of the tap-room and exit.*
— 'Atheist'

While such do name me so, I wear the name
As proudly as an honor. — 'Atheist.'

Lodge.

Ah, Kit, too many hands have got this lash
Against thee. Here it is, to bear me out.
The common voice is risen. Thou canst hear
In that man-hunting tumult, every threat,
From the indignant cry of simple folk
Stung by thy jesting, even to the hiss
Of a trodden worm. But now, forbidden, — barred
From the Queen's Players! —

Marlowe.

So I am turned out.

Lodge.

Out of the Court, thou seest, with all disfavor.
How did it go so far?

[Marlowe *shrugs his shoulders, looking out of the window.*

I beg thee, listen.
What now? More dust?

Marlowe.

Ay, dust turned into woman.

[Her Ladyship *is seen to pass the casement.*

— 'My Lady Hush.' — Go not. It is soon over.

[Lodge *falls back.* Marlowe *comes down, step by step, half turning his face to the door as if he were drawing some one after him.* Her Ladyship *appears in the doorway with a falcon on her wrist, and a riding-mask in the other hand. On the instant* Lodge *slips out of the casement, right, into the court, and disappears.* Marlowe *faces the doorway squarely.* — *Enter* Her Ladyship: *she blows a little silver whistle. Enter* Jermyn.

Her Ladyship (*to* Jermyn, *holding forth the falcon*).

Take her; and see thou make the jess secure.
'T was basely mended. Bring it to me here,
And speedily. [*Exit* Jermyn, *left.*

[Her Ladyship *comes down a step or two towards* Marlowe.

I would not have you think that I am come
In answer to a summons.

Marlowe.

No indeed!

Her. Ladyship.

I have been slow to teach you as I should;
Trying the tedious way of silence.

Marlowe.

Ay,
Most tedious! But I would not understand.

Her Ladyship.

And since your importunity would still
Beat at the gate, nor take no word from reason,
Last, I have come, as you demanded of me.
Demanded, sooth! —

Marlowe.

Forgive the violence
Of a charlatan who doubts his art at length,
Reluctant Helena!

Her Ladyship.

No more of this.
Your fantasy outwears the day of welcome;
And you are grown too arrogant. You own
No height above your own vain-glorious spirit
That threatens everything. It is too plain, —
Your climbing blasphemy.

Marlowe.

Ay, let me hear.
Is this the charge against me, from your lips? —
Why I am barred? — And I have wounded you
This long time with my godless pride of thought! —

I am thus slow to take it for my eyes
Detected not your suffering loyalty
To the true Faith.

Her Ladyship.

Be bitter, if you must.
I would have warned you, but 't is late to warn.
Take a last word: come not about the Court.
Your reasonings are known there; they are known —

Marlowe.

To the Queen's Players. [*She starts.*
So: keep from the Court.
My reasonings are known. — I am in danger.
You come to warn me of it?

Her Ladyship.

You have heard.

Marlowe.

Why do you fear me?

Her Ladyship.

Nay, I fear you not.

Marlowe.

Why do you fear the world?

Her Ladyship.

I fear it not.

Marlowe.

No, no? The world nor me? Then why not say,

'T is all because you love me not? — Because
Now you would have me hence? —
O Helena,
How cheaply at the last you sell your God!
Thirty pieces of silver, I had sworn
Would be too little! Ah, but not for you.
Not even with a kiss, but with a lie,
You shew me how you rate Him, — all of you!
I waited for the reason. There had been
A chance to make you glorious with some truth, —
And me to blink at unaccustomed gold:
A brave '*I love you not, — I wish you gone!*' —
Such valor of the devil as he respects!
But this poor coinage of an outcast metal,
Stamped with God's image! Ha, deny Him, I?
What have I seen of Him that I should know
Where He is or is not? I have searched the mire;
And found Him not, indeed; and for such temples
As Holy Writ would have it that He dwells in,
Look you, how cold and empty! — Cold, not pure.
No flame of heaven or hell, — no fire at all.

[*She shrinks backward. He follows step by step.*

Deny Him, I? And thou, dost thou affirm? —
Living denial! — Gentle blasphemy!

[*She lifts her riding-mask to her face: he catches it from her and holds it aloft.*

Will you begone? Nay, hear my parting word.
Unmask you, Helen. — Truly you must go
The way of dreams. Will you believe you live?
No, no, I think not, no indeed, not you!
The fire burns out and leaves the ashes there,
The cock crows and the spirits must begone.
I took you for a Woman, thing of dust, —
I — I who showed you first what you might be!
But see now, you were hollow all the time,
A piece of magic. Now the air blows in,
And you are gone in ashes. Well, begone!
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust! — Nay, go.

[*He flings the mask across the room.* Her Ladyship *before the threshold watches him a second, then blows the little silver whistle.*

Reënter Jermyn *with the falcon. They look at each other.*

Jermyn.

I have the jesses mended.

Her Ladyship (*suavely*).

. . . And the Writ?

[*Exeunt* Her Ladyship *and* Jermyn.

[Lodge *reappears at casement, peers after them, then enters by the window and hastens toward* Marlowe. *Seeing the mask, he picks it up.*

Lodge.

Stay, what is here? Shall I go after her?

Marlowe.

There 's nothing to go after. 'T is a mask;
All that is left of something that did seem
A most rare woman. — Remnant of black art,
O riddle of the world!
(*Taking the mask.*) Behold her here.
Behold, the place for eyes to beckon through;
Here the red mouth that spoke reproaches to me,
Yes, in behalf of God! — Consider, look;
'T was this that would convert me. Small and black;
The headsman wears another.

[*Flings it away.*

Lodge.

'T is over, then? Thou dost not love her?

Marlowe.

No.

Lodge.

Nor for this long time?

Marlowe.

No.

Lodge.

Nor ever?

Marlowe.

— No!

Lodge.

Then break my soul if I may understand! —
Art thou the man to fall into despair
Over some lie, some game of hide-and-seek
This Madam plays? Nay, tell me; there is more.

Marlowe.

More, is there? What?

Lodge.

— Never tell me these buffets
Of a poor harvest, or a heavy rain,
Dismay thee, arrogant devil of us all!
But here I find thee, Kit, inscrutable
In thy torn splendors.

Marlowe.

H'm! Torn splendors, are they?

Torn splendors, — 't is a phrase ; and gorgeous
threadbare ;
Fine ruin. Well ?

Lodge.

Speak out. There is yet more.
Never tell me a woman's falsity
Comes like a thunder-clap at this late day.

Marlowe.

It was not the one woman. It was all.
She meant the world, — the world.

Lodge (*eagerly*).

Well, there 's the sky !
Whip up the horses of the Sun ; be bold
There 's thy dominion. What hast thou to do
With tangibles ? — I quote thee to thyself.
Whatever is or is not on the ground,
Make to thyself some image of the air.
Thou art a master-architect. Come, come ! —
Thou, who couldst speak for '*Faustus*,' in the
play,
Such longings, fit to turn a Prodigal,
As if thy soul were homesick after God !

Marlowe.

— As if ! —

Lodge.

I say, what matters it to thee ?
Thine own philosophy, thy fame —

Marlowe.

Fame, fame?
Forbidden the Queen's Players? — Hounded out
By a Court scandal? Nay, hands off the sun!
Drone holy, poet, drone, or hold thy tongue;
Will it not lie? — Be off then, atheist!

Lodge.

This is not like thee.

Marlowe (*restlessly*).

— Bah, the plague 's about!
Here you may see Belshazzar at his feast.

[*With a grand gesture indicating the tavern.*

Nor do we lack our writing on the wall,
Traced in a fiery hand.

[*He picks up a piece of chalk from a gaming-table and scrawls some figures on the wainscot.*

So, *Mene — Mene — Tekel — Upharsin.* — Being interpreted,
Nine pounds, three shillings, tuppence on the score!

[*He comes down, abstractedly tossing the piece of chalk.*

What is there left? Give the poor worm its triumph.
I will go back to Sodom.

Lodge (*laughing*).

Not for this!
Man, man, what is it now that thou Must-Have,
Having had all? — I tell thee thou art sour'd
To hear the little country-maid is wed,
As the poor devil clamored in thine ears!

Marlowe.

So she is wed.

Lodge.

And therefore safe and precious.
Come, think upon a far removèd fairness
That is not thine; and bring dead beauty back.

Marlowe.

Dead beauty. Nay, the plague hath everything.

Lodge.

The plague hath thee! I swear thou shalt not spread
Infection so: come here and take thy mark.

[*He catches the bit of chalk, then scores a cross heavily on* Marlowe's *breast, laughing.*

Here is a warning for good honest folk. —
The man is stricken. — 'Lord Have Mercy
Upon Us!'
Nay . . .
[Marlowe *moves away from him, staring fiercely.*
Marlowe (*in a low voice*).
— Wilt thou open that raw curse? — Hands
off!
Lodge.
What hath —
Marlowe.
— Hands off.
Lodge.
I hurt —
Marlowe.
Hands off, I say!
[*Rubbing the mark.*
It will not out — it will not out? So, so.
Stay then, and every devil may come to hear,
And heaven may have its laugh! —
I ever speak
As if there were a Something there to listen:
The shadow of the little mind, grotesque,
Confident, helpless, thrown upon the clouds
To serve him for a god. And I have sworn
There is no God.

— Ah, but there should be one!
There should be one. And there 's the bitterness
Of this unending torture-place for men;
For the proud soul who craves a Perfectness
That might out-wear the rotting of all things
Rooted in earth, that bloom so piercing fair,
A little while, a little while, — O God!
The little, little while. . . .
No, something, something perfect, man or beast!
What is it all, without? — And what 's a man?
To go a blind way seeking here and there,
Spending and spending, for the Beautiful,
On shams and shows, and clay that worms devour;
Banquet of famine, till all 's gone, all 's gone;
And he is fain to fill that tortured craving
With husks the swine do eat.
[*Clenching his hand against the sky.*
— Almighty Void!
And there is nothing there for me to curse,
In this despair.
I tell thee, I have come
Unto a horror no man dreams upon.
Nothing is left and nothing is, to curse.

For you may hear the crying of the wind,
Crying despair and darkness round the earth,
Without a hope of rest. But who has caught
That torturer by the gray, ancient locks,
Or who can stab the wind? —
Hast ever thought
Of the thirst of hatred with no thing to hate?
Here, here behold me with my enemy! —
The Void.

Lodge (*sadly*).

I have no answer for you.

Marlowe.

No.

None; there is none.

Reënter Bame *from the tap-room, in a daze.*

There is no pilgrimage;
No answer and no healing, and no hope.
How simple, if there were a shrine for me,
Beyond some journey; as the pilgrims went,
So late, to Canterbury! — But for me
There is no shrine.

Bame (*coming down*).

Thou shalt not think of that.
Thou shalt not go, I tell thee.

Lodge.

Peace! — Go where?
Who talks of going?

Bame (*cunningly*).

Nay, I am not fooled.
He thinks to go to Canterbury now,
Now that it is too late. 'The shrine,' saith he!
Oh, that would be a jest; but I will warn
them . . .
Pilgrimage, pilgrimage! Eh, denier of God?
Thou shalt not go.

Marlowe.

What 's this I shall not do?

Bame.

Thou shalt not find her. [*Exit.*

Marlowe.

Shall I not, in faith!
Mad-men have wit. — There 's one thing left
to see, —
The little Shrine. We called her that. — Tom
Lodge,
Dost thou remember her? — The clearest eyes
I ever looked into; nay, the first eyes
I ever saw deep down unto the well!
And what was that he babbled of her first, —
That she was mindful of me? — [*It is sunset.*

Lodge.

Ay, come, come.
There is some virtue breathing in the world.

Give up your dark dreams, all, unto their grave.
Look not upon them now; but tell yourself
You hail the summons of 'Bring-out-your-dead,'
And leave a piteous burthen. — Pluck up heart!
Here 's the free air, and sunset and the May:
Fill you with freshness. — Why, the summer 's here.

Marlowe.

Wait; I will see. Dost thou remember her?
A little figure, standing white and shy,
Like those above the Portal there at home,
On the Cathedral. And by now — by now —
(*harshly*)
What wilt thou wager? She is worn with rain
And sodden leaves. There 's nothing lovely left.
The storms have hurt her fairness, — and perhaps
Her hands are broken. She was beautiful;
And so there is some ruin come upon her.
Yes, I will see!

Lodge.

— No! To what end were that?

Marlowe.

And if there be no change, then I am saved,
Yes, I am saved! She will remember me.
Come, I will take the Song I promised her,
Too long ago. I did forget, — but now,
I have it all! — I bring my wedding-gift —

[*Goes to the table and shakes papers out of the books, madly knocking over a chair.*

Yes, she is wed. But what of that? You heard?
She had a mind to me. — Oh, but she listened! —
And she shall have her song. — And I will have
The kiss she would not give me, for a token!

Reënter from the tap-room Rowse, *five or six Taverners, and the* Host.

A pilgrimage, a pilgrimage, Tom Lodge!

Host.

What 's on?

Rowse.

— Nay, that should be a merry humor!
'A pilgrimage,' says he, 'a pilgrimage'!

[*Laughter.*

[Marlowe *faces the group with contemptuous enjoyment. They hail his speech delightedly.*

Marlowe.

Give ear unto the Preacher: It is written,
That for the sake of but one righteous man,
A city shall be saved. But I, in truth,
Seeing the sickness wear in London yonder,
Am sore in doubt to find a perfect soul.
[*Loud laughter.*
I have been with you long, and I do think
I find it not among you.

Rowse.

— Shall I laugh
Like this another twelve-month?

Marlowe.

Who can say?
Look to yourselves! — For me, I must be-
gone.
[*To* Lodge *exultantly over their heads while they cheer.*
Ay, to the Shrine! — to heal me of my curse.
A pilgrimage!

Act IV.

Scene: *Whitsun-eve near Canterbury, the last of May. Moonrise. Interior of a spacious farm-house. Casements at back open to the twilight. — A stair to left of centre leading to a gallery above, from which opens a door to an upper chamber. There is a remnant of fire in the open chimney-place left, with a settle against the landing of the stairway, making an ingle nook. Right, a dresser with a few pieces of Tudor silver and a pitcher of water. Rushes on the floor. — Flowering boughs hung about. Door at back, centre.*

Discovered at rise, Alison *and* Gabriel *side by side at the open casement;* Gabriel *with his viol. They sing softly together: he humming and occasionally chiming in with a deep note. At intervals there is sound of a cathedral bell from Canterbury.*

Song.

SUMMER-MOON, Summer-moon,
Bless thy golden face.
Come above the downs, now;
Do the garden grace.
While we are thy care to keep,
Bless the field, bless the sheep;
Shine on our sleep.

While the nightingales do sing,
Come, bonny guest.
Thy foot-fall is a silver thing,
West, — west.
Morning goes and afternoon;
Summer will be going soon.
Ay, Summer-moon!

Alison.

— See.

Gabriel.

She is coming.

Alison.

Just above the trees,
The blessed moon.

Gabriel.

— Thanks to our wakening!
Ay, 't is a golden. But she cannot give
A light like thee.

— Come, thou art wearied out.
What hast thou done with Hugh and Jennifer?

Alison.

I bade them go and have their Whitsun-ale
With all the neighbors. We will watch at home,
And let them take their turn of merriment.
I am content. [Gabriel *puts by his viol.*

Gabriel.

A little vigil then;
A few hours more, and then 't is the Moon's watch,
While Alison may sleep. So the good world
Will turn and take its rest.

Alison.

You laugh at me.
Oh, the long, long, bright day! I 'm wearied out
Most sweetly. What a brave font-hallowing
It was; and then the morrice-dances there,
Around the maypole. — Dost thou see the green
Upon the hem of this? — Dear grass of May! —
Little green kisses on my Whitsun-shoes! —

And then the neighbors all. — And home with thee.
A long, bright day.

[*They come down to the settle.*

Gabriel.

Ay, now we 're home again.

Alison.

And still it is so like a bridal time.
You keep my eyes wide open with your praise
Stolen from the moon. Take care: she may not bless
The harvest, goodman!

Gabriel.

I may come to be
Some poet-hood, altho' I have few words.
Sweet-cheek, I have a mind to say a thing.

Alison (*drowsily*).

Say on. Indeed I hear thee. Come, what news?

Gabriel.

Oh, is it so? Do I say nothing then
Unless it be some news? Of men or sheep?
Well, some day I shall get this trick o' words.
Mark what I learn: 't is just the pointing out
A family resemblance. If I say,

'Thou art my hawthorn, and my marigold,
And a white swan moreover,' simple men
May say I lie; for thou art not, in faith.
But if I say thou 'rt like them, in that all
Be goodly things and gladden heart to see,
Why this is true; and so I am a poet.
But for the things I care to dwell on most,
Like other men, — for I am daily wear! —
They are Moon and Rose, — and such a Summer-eve.
Now mark me what I say: my Moon, my Rose,
My own Midsummer-Eve, thou art all these.
[*He looks into her face, stroking her hair. She is asleep.*
Eh, half-asleep? Marry, 't is ever so;
I wax most eloquent to thy shut eyes.
Here is my schooling-hour in gentle speech.
I can say over all the things I read,
Sweet-one-by-one: marry, 't is ever so;
I never tune my tongue while thou art waking!
[*A pause broken by the sound of steps on the walk and up to the door at back.*
Enter Barnby.
Barnby.
Well, well — [Alison *wakes.*

Alison.

What, home so soon?

Barnby.

An errand, lass,
An errand only; I am off again —
Eh, a fine night! — Whom should I meet with now,
Only a half hour back, in Mercery Lane,
But some one — nay, a friend. 'T is Richard Bame!
And he would have me stop and bid thee, lad,
To meet him at The Chequers-of-the-Hope,
Ay, this same even, to a Whitsun-ale.

Alison.

Bame?

Barnby.

Ay. And do it, lad. The fellow 's sore,
Thou knowest. I did see him last at Deptford
To tell him of thy wedding. — But by this,
See you, he plucks up heart to be a man
And make his peace with Gabriel.

Gabriel.

I 'll go.
But why, I wonder, did he not come here?

Alison.

Oh, he were best to see you, Gabriel,
Alone. — And come back early.

Barnby.

I 'll along
With you, lad, to the turning.

[*Exeunt* Barnby *and* Gabriel.

[*The twilight rapidly darkens.* Alison *watches them from the casement.* Gabriel's *voice is heard singing, as he goes down the road.*

'While we are thy care to keep,
Bless the field — bless the sheep,
Shine on our sleep.'

Alison (*half-singing as if it were a charm*).

Summer-Moon, Summer-Moon,
Now the day is done;
Shed a little silverness
Down on Alison.

Summer-Moon, Summer-Moon,
Since he loves thee well,
Bless as I can never do,
Gabriel.

Heigh-ho! When he is by, I do not mark,
But when he 's gone the house seems very still.
Heigh-ho! — But I 'm asleep.

[*She goes upstairs slowly, humming, and into the upper chamber, closing the door. The place is dark for a moment. A pause; then footsteps on the garden walk. — Some one looks in at the casement; comes to the door and knocks; knocks again loudly.*

Enter Marlowe. — *He goes to the stair and beats upon it with his dagger once or twice, looking about him, half evilly. Above, the door opens slightly.*

Alison.

What, Gabriel?
Nay, who? — Are you come back again?

[*He makes no reply.* Alison *appears in the gallery, without her coif, a lighted candle in her hand. She is uncertain and troubled, but full of calmness. Unable to see who it is, she descends the stairs deliberately, holding the candle high. He watches her. On the last step, she lifts the candle so that the light falls upon his face, and looks at him steadily for a second; then grasps the post of the stair, with a shock of grief and amazement.*

— 'T is thou!
Christopher Marlowe.

Marlowe (*watching her*).
Alison.

Alison.
'T is thou!

Marlowe.
So I am changed, then.

Alison.
Nay, I cannot see.
The fire is dying.
[*She goes to the fire-place.*

Marlowe.
Come and look at me.
The fire is dead. — Light up the candles here,
If thou art feared of shadows!

Alison.
Nay, I am not.

Marlowe.
I frighted you with knocking on the door;
Though, sooth to say, sweet friend, no highwayman
Would so compel a welcome. — I am changed.
Regard me not. — I see you had forgotten
My face.

Alison.
No, no; indeed it is not true.

Marlowe.

What irks you then? That I am something
pale?
Older? — By more, indeed, than these three
years.
For so youth wears — and damask may grow
dull —
In sodden weather. Well. But you, you
keep
The face of Maytime. Let me see it.

Alison (*with an outburst of compassion*).

Ah,
Thou art all wearied out!

Marlowe.

. . . Set down the light.
It dazzles. — No. I prithee, pardon me.
Yes, I am weary. I have frighted you?
You were alone?

Alison.

Ay, they are gone awhile.

Marlowe.

No neighbor near? Nay, Bride! And you
alone!
Why are you left alone? (*winningly*)

Alison.

'T is Whitsun-eve.

Marlowe (*looking at the boughs*).

These breathe of holiday. So, Whitsun-eve.
They are not bridal then?

Alison.

Oh, we were wed
Beyond a month ago.

Marlowe.

The bridal boughs
Are faded, are they? — No? But I am late
To bring you bridal wishes, though I come:
And here 's my wedding gift. — Stay —

[*Feels in his breast.*

Alison.

— Oh, it is —

Marlowe.

The Song, '*Come live with me, and be my Love.*'
Have you forgotten?

Alison.

I! — But you — 't is not —

Marlowe (*at a loss to find it*).

Gone? But it is. — I set it down for you
In a fair copy; and it is not here.
Where should I lose it? — At the inn, belike,
Where I did spend some moment but to ask —

The road. — I am more a beggar than I dreamed.
You should have had the song.

Alison.

Ah, vex you not.
Indeed, I have it. [*Smiling.*

Marlowe.

Where?

Alison (*simply, touching her heart*).

It is all here.

Marlowe.

Nay! — It was true, then. — You, you do not mean —
You do not mean that you remember all,
With the one hearing.

Alison.

Nay, not all, not all.

Marlowe.

With the one hearing! Will you tell me this?

Alison.

With the one hearing? Ah, friend Christopher,
You sang it to me once; but I could hear
Over and over, many, many days,
As if you sang.

Marlowe (*watching her*).

You were a dreamer, then.
I took you for a little country child,
That sleeps without a dream.

Alison.

Oh, children dream.

Marlowe.

And are you happy? — Bride? For as to me,
You see that I am altered; you will say,
With dreams and waking: dreams of powers and thrones
And principalities, as the Book will have it, —
And waking in the mire. You do not know
The sense of waking down among the dead,
Hard by some lazar-house.

Alison (*turning to the fire*).

Nay; but I know
The sense of death. And then to rise again,
And feel thyself bewildered, like a spirit
Out of the grave-clothes and the fragment strewings;
Early and tranquil, — happy; — and yet thin,
Thin for the dawn to shine through as a shell,
And some way older grown.

Marlowe (*behind her*).

Thou sayest this?

Alison.

Ah, I am older.

Marlowe.

Where didst thou learn this?

[*She is silent, looking at the fire with endurance.*

Where didst thou learn? Of what extremity?
Long, — unto death? — It was a sorrow then?
Some grief that wore thee so —

Alison.

It was a grief.

Marlowe (*ironically*).

A bitter grief?

Alison.

Ay, it was bitter then.

Marlowe.

Tell me of it. There is no grief for thee
By right; it cannot be. There was no grief,
Sure, but a dream. Tell me the dream.

Alison.

No.

Marlowe.

No? —

Alison.

It is not now my own.

Marlowe (*eagerly*).

Thou wilt not tell me?

Alison.

No.

Marlowe.

Wilt thou do one little service then, —
But for a whim? Stand here and let me see
Thy face, if it has altered. When you came
Downstair but now, I could not see you well,
For light. [*Reaching a candle.*
Is this the same you held? Another,
[*He takes another and she stands tremulously quiet while he faces her, watching her always.*
Another, then — so, prithee. Thou hast heard
Of Light that shined in darkness, hast thou not?
And darkness comprehended not the Light?
So. But I tell thee why. It was because
The Dark, a sleeping brute, was blinded first,
Bewildered at a thing it did not know.
Nay, think, to have seen it never, never yet!
Have pity on the Dark, I tell you, Bride.
For after all is said, there is no thing
So hails the Light as that same blackness there,
O'er which it shines the whiter. Do you think
It will not know at last? — it will not know?

[*She slowly turns towards the fire again, and listens, as he sets down the candle with a shaking hand.*

What of the darkness? Will you ever try
To fathom that? Nay, nay, why should you so,
You or another? Yet I tell you this:
There is one side of the earth that even now
Groans in the darkness, covered up with gloom
And the low tide and dregs of sodden wreck,
Waiting and waiting, lightless. Even now,
While you can bless the Moon that blesses you,
And here the wildest valley and the down,
Oblivious of all shadow, — silver brimmed,
Turn to her whiteness, like a dreaming face
Unto the eyes that love; a wistful cheek,
A heart of earth, for her all white, all white.
Thou dost not know.

Alison.

I hear.

Marlowe (*behind her*).

But yet not all.
I will not tell thee all. Yet think of this.
There are a thousand things men know of me
To my dishonor. There are thousand more
Their own dishonor blackens me withal:
Lies, slanders, fear! — My sins they have by rote,

And never miss one; no! no miser of them
Who, prying in the mire with hands of greed,
After a missing groat, could let that go, —
But not a jest of mine! — My blackest depth
They know; and more than I they know of it,
Who live and hunt me there, yes, only there,
Avid of foulness, so they hound me out,
Away — away — from any chance of grace, —
Away from blessing that they prate about,
But never saw, and never dreamed upon, —
And know not how to long for with desire!
The Dark, yes, yes. But stranger times than all,
The few, few times that I have looked at sin,
Facing it, longing, — passed it, — (why, indeed?)
They know not! Ay, the one time in the world,
I put from me — I strove to put from me —
My Heart's Desire, none knoweth, no, not one,
And none will ever know.

Alison (*turning suddenly*).

But I will keep
Thy word, with mine eyes dark.

Marlowe.

Thou dost not know!

Alison.

But I will keep it. Leave it here with me,
Thy heaviness, — thy grief.

Marlowe.

Believest thou?

Alison.

Ay, as God liveth!

Marlowe.

— Dost thou think on Him? —
Well, I have seen thee; thou art here, at least.

Alison (*gently*).

Art thou an unbeliever?

Marlowe.

I believe
In thee.

[*She looks towards him wistfully. He hesitates. Then, as she sits in the corner of the settle by the fire, suddenly he crosses and flings himself passionately on his knees beside her, burying his face against her gown.*

. . . Oh, take my heart into thy hand,
Thou virgin-mother . . . if it will not stain.
Thou knowest that the figures carven out,
Above the Portal . . . sometimes rest a bird,

And hold secure — a nest, for pity's sake;
A sorry nest, — a beggar thatch of straw
And stolen bravery, that yet will cling
To that home shelter, proud it is so white.
This fantasy — thou wilt not understand;
But thou art patient. — So, I trust to thee
All that I dream of that no man could guess:
The dreams that come not true; the broken hope;
Some manhood which I know not in myself,
That will not be consoled. . . .
Whatever thou believest, — in thy hands!
I shall look back and think it is not dead;
But thou wilt keep it for me.

[*Bell in the distance. He rises.*

— Wilt thou not?

Alison.

Oh, I will keep it.

[*They face each other radiantly.*

See, 't is Whitsun-eve.
To-morrow, —

Marlowe.

Then?

Alison.

You know, the old wives say
Whatever one shall ask and pray to have,

Of the Sun, that rises dancing in that dawn,
Why, you shall have it surely. I will pray —

Marlowe.

Some boon for me?

Alison.

Indeed, for thee: thy peace.

Marlowe.

I must go far for that!

Alison.

To thine own heart.
For if thou have it not within thy heart,
The world will never spend a thought for thee;
And all things fail.

Marlowe (*with passion*).

How camest thou so wise?

Alison.

Nay, I am old!

Marlowe.

How camest thou so wise? —
And I have naught to give thee. — It is gone.
Strange, that I cannot think. Ah well, what need? —
What need of songs for you? Your people come
Home to you, soon?

Alison.

Yes, father and — Gabriel.

Marlowe (*watching her*).

'T was he belike that passed me on the road,
Singing, as I came hither. — Hear the bell.
'T is a long road. Mayhap, before I go . . .
Wilt thou . . . wilt give me — nay, I am athirst —
A cup of . . . water?

Alison.

Oh, but only that?

Marlowe (*after a pause*).

A cup of water.

[*She hastens to bring it from the dresser. He drinks, and hands her the cup.*

Alison.

Nay, no more?

Marlowe.

No more.
Indeed, I am most happy. Fare you well.
If there were any blessing in my tongue —
But — keep thee well.

Alison.

All good go with thee!

Marlowe (*going*).

Yet,
Come to the door with me and hold the light,
So that I see my way.

Alison (*between laughter and tears*).

Why, there 's the moon
Over us all. What shall I say of thee?

Marlowe.

Ay, but she doth not give so clear a light
As thou.

Alison.

I shall believe thou art afraid!

Marlowe.

So am I, — of the Dark.

Alison (*in the doorway.*)

Lo, now!

Marlowe.

Good-night.

[*He steps back, looking at her for a moment; turns; goes out. She stands in the doorway with her candle uplifted.*

Act V.

Scene: *Deptford tavern, 1 June, 1593. Early evening. — Doors and casements wide. No lights within the tavern. — Outside, a red afterglow. — A solitary figure blots the light from the window, right; it is* Marlowe *sitting in his accustomed place, his cup before him. Without, at a little distance, the* Bellman's *voice is heard in a sing-song call.* Marlowe *lifts his head and listens.*

Bellman.

PAST — seven — o'clock — and a sultry evening.

Marlowe.

'It strikes, it strikes! Now body turn to air,
Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell!
O mercy, heaven! look not so fierce on me!
Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile.' —

Bellman (passing).

Past — seven — o'clock — and a sultry evening.

Enter from tap-room, Host *with three or four Taverners. They light the place squalidly, order the tables, et cetera.* — Marlowe *continues his 'Faustus' monologue, murmuring to himself ironically.*

Marlowe.

'Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease and midnight never come:
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!
O lente, lente, currite, noctis equi!'

Bellman (in the distance).

Past — seven — o'clock — a sultry — evening.

Marlowe.

'The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike —
The devil will come and Faustus must be damned.
[*Looking out at the afterglow.*
See where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop of blood will save me: O my Christ! —
Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ;
Yet will I call' —

Enter from the street, Francis Archer, Rowse,

Gill, *and others, men and women. They cluster about the tables, left, noisily. The* Host *and a tapster bring in ale.*

[Marlowe *mutters on to himself, and the words are lost in the street noises of rough singing and footsteps.*

Rowse (*to* Archer *and* Gill).

Yare, yare!

Archer.

— Here is a nook.

[*They come down to a table, left.*

Rowse.

A quiet haven for a cup o' comfort,
After a scorching day. (*To* Host.) What cheer? Bestir!

Gill.

Hurry thy heels. We 're all as dry as mowers! —

Archer.

Now for a song and sack.

Rowse.

— Nay, first the sack,
And then a rowse and three, to Mistress Moll.

Gill (*cuffing him*).

'T is Gillian is my name, — I am no Moll.
Here 's for a gentle spirit. Wear my favor!

[*Laughter.*

[Marlowe *looks at the revellers with fixed eyes.*

Marlowe.

'*This soul should fly from me, and I be changed*
Into some brutish beast. — All beasts are happy,
For when they die,
Their souls are soon dissolved in elements;
But mine must still live to be plagued in hell.'

Rowse (*looking at* Marlowe).

There is that merry devil over yond!
He sits there like Beelzebub the devil.

Gill.

That 's the wrong name. Beelzebub 's a prince.

Archer.

Will you be learned? — Nay, I know not which!
Call him and see what name he 'll answer to.

Rowse (*calling* Marlowe).

Ho, devil, devil, devil, — here, good devil!

Gill.

Nay, he 's too proud for us.

Archer.

Marry, too gloomy!
A game, a game! How stand you for a game?
And Mistress, you shall cast your eye upon it,
And so amend me.

[*Lays some coins upon the table. They play.*

Enter Bame. *He comes down slowly, as if according to habit, then turns to look at the seat by the window, and sees* Marlowe. *As if doubting his senses, he points to him.*

Bame.

Look you . . . he is there.
Look, — it was all for nothing. He is there.

Rowse (*turning*).

Why, here am I, and here 's some other he's!
Will 't do ye?

Archer.

Here 's a man that hath one wit.

Bame (*madly*).

He is come back, ye know it, — here again!
But will you shield him? Nay, not long, not long.
'T is I will shew . . . Come, turn him to the street!

[Marlowe *listens contemptuously.* Bame *appeals to the* Host.

Host.

To humor thee? Nay, mind thy tongue, I say,
If thou wilt make complaint.

Bame.

. . . I say, you 're all

Set upon ruin if you harbor him.
They are upon his track, as ye shall see! —
And you will let him stay, — make arrogant,
Eat, drink, sit idle by the window there,
To drive you mad. — I say, to drive you mad!
[*Loud laughter.*
Ay, will you laugh? Not long. — Ye are all sold
Unto the devil . . . But if ye take it light
To hobanob with the blasphemer there,
Ask what he waits, and wherefore? I am by,
As any good and honest man, to shew
That he is lay'd for. Ask him if he come
From Canterbury.

Rowse.

What ado in that?
He did not burn the city, did he so?
Or rob the shrine? [*Laughter.*

Bame (*eagerly*).

The shrine — the shrine, says he! —
Ay, you have said it best, what he would do! —
Robbing a man — my friend — of a young wife! —
[Marlowe *rises.*
Look there, look there! See him; I knew, — I knew.

I went to warn them; but they would not hear!
I found the cursed letter that he wrote, —
Made like a ballad, all to charm her eyes
With vows and promises; all love; and she,
So young — a gentlewoman —

Marlowe (*coming down towards* Bame).

Strangle thee! —
Thou cast-off devil of madness —

Host.

Sirs, — good sirs —
The Watch —

Archer.

Ah, hold thy drone and let us hear!

Bame (*holding up a paper*).

He shall not fool ye, — I have witness; — read!
He bids her come — [*Reading.*
'Come live with me, and be' —

Marlowe (*snatching the paper*).

'And be my Love.' — The song — sole innocent!

[*He thrusts it in his breast.*

Here, come — come home.
(*To* Bame.) — For thee, thou primal worm,
Turn, turn again! I would not bruise thy head
With my own heel. — Thou ineffectual adder!

Bame.

Shall it be suffered for another day?
I told you he is lay'd for . . . You shall see
The law upon him, and upon yourselves,
To fellow with him. He, — a lying player,
A conjurer, an atheist, that drinks
And wagers with a swarm of outcast knaves,
Thieves, ruffians, and the women worse than all! —
The women, after —

Marlowe (*fiercely*).

Peace!

Bame (*pointing to the whole group*).

He comes back here,
Here, from his own town and from her, from her —
From her —

Gill.

Now mend thy manners! By the mass,
And what is she? —

Marlowe (*crossing hastily to* Gill *and bowing*).

Madam, you hear!

Bame (*beside himself*).

Look there!

Marlowe (*with ceremony*).

Madam, the fellow speaks despitefully
Here of your graces.

Gill.

Ay, he did, he did!
So thank you, you 're an honest gentleman.

Archer (*to* Marlowe).

Hold off. Will you be merry? But not here.
Have off with you! — This quarrel 's mine.
Do you
Keep to your own!

Marlowe (*to* Bame, *indicating* Gill).

. . . In defence of the gentlewoman
Here. [*The Taverners gather about.*

Archer (*to* Marlowe).

'T is my quarrel, — I shall do for him!
What make you meddling here?

Marlowe (*savagely, trying to put aside* Archer).

Out of my way! —
What, fool? Will you be dead? — Why,
have your will! [*Drawing.*

Bame.

Stay them

Marlowe (*to him*).

— You, second! — This is but a moment!

Archer.

Ah, do you reckon so? — [*Drawing.*

Host.

Stay — stay!

Marlowe.

— Not I!

[*The crowd closes about, murmuring. It parts suddenly.* — Archer *is flung across the room.* Marlowe *falters, upright, hands over eyes, then falls.* — *There is a shudder among the people. A few rush out. Some one blows out several lights.* Bame *stands in a daze, looking at* Marlowe, *as he lies. The* Host *and others stand by* Archer, *who is breathing hard.*

Rowse.

Hist — hist!

Archer.

— He 's ended.

A By-stander.

Call the Watch!

Others.

— The Watch!

[*Exeunt, calling.*

[*Noise of horse's hoofs, then Enter* Gabriel Andrew, *breathless and travel-stained.*

Gabriel.

— What 's here? . . . Already! . . .

(*To* Bame.) *Thou* —

Bame.

— It was not I.

[Gabriel *hastens to* Marlowe, *and leans over him, kneeling to raise his head.*

Gabriel.

Dost thou not know me? — Canst thou hear?
No — no?

Marlowe.

O God . . . God . . . God! [*He dies.*

[*The tread of the watch is heard a little way off. Within there is silence.* — Bame *still regards the body of* Marlowe *vacantly. As the tread of the watch sounds nearer he moves towards* Marlowe, *fascinated; then draws back again.*

Bame (*to the body*).

Will you be looking yet? — Ah, shut the eyes!

Enter the watchmen led by the Watch, *with a lanthorn. — The Taverners, murmuring, stand back.*

The Watch.

What 's here?

A By-stander.

A man is dying.

Second By-stander.

— Nay, he 's dead.

The Watch.

Who is he?

Host.

— Nay, I know not. 'T is no guest
Of mine.

Rowse.

His name is Marley. —

Host.

— 'T is a player —

[*The watchmen come down to the body of* Marlowe *and lift up the lanthorn over his face.* Gabriel *is kneeling still, with his hand on* Marlowe's *heart.*

'T was done with his own dagger. He would die,
Ye see! — and that with cursing to the end.

Gabriel.

Peace!

Host.

— Did ye hear the oath?

Gabriel.

I heard the cry.

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